(61)

BENGAL

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE,

1913-1914.

REPORT.

(2)

Hon'ble Mr. E. V. LEVINGE, C.S.I., Member of the Executive Council, Bihar and Orissa	*President.*
Mr. H. V. LOVETT, C.S.I., Commissioner, United Provinces	*Members.*
Mr. N. D. BEATSON BELL, C.I.E., Commissioner, Bengal	
Mr. K. C. DE, Collector, Bengal	
Mr. C. E. Low, C.I.E., Director of Agriculture and Industries, Central Provinces	
Mr. E. N. BLANDY, Assistant Collector, Bengal	*Secretary.*

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POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

POLITICAL.

DARJEELING, THE 25TH OCTOBER 1913.

RESOLUTION—No. 4425 P.—D.

THE Governor in Council, with the concurrence of the Government of India, has decided to appoint a Committee to examine the conditions prevailing in the districts in Bengal.

2. The constitution of the Committee will be as follows :—

The Hon'ble Mr. Edward Vere Levinge, C.S.I., Member of Council, Government of Bihar and Orissa—*President.*

Mr. Harrington Verney Lovett, C.S.I., Commissioner of the Benares Division, United Provinces.

The Hon'ble Mr. Nicholas Dodd Beatson Bell, C.I.E., Commissioner of the Dacca Division, Bengal.

Mr. Charles Ernest Low, C.I.E., Deputy Commissioner, Central Provinces.

Mr. Kiran Chandra De, Magistrate and Collector, Bengal.

Mr. E. N. Blandy, I.C.S., Bengal—*Secretary to the Committee.*

The services of the officers who belong to the Provinces other than Bengal have been placed by the Government of India at the disposal of the Bengal Government.

3. The terms of reference to the Committee are as follows :—

To examine the conditions prevailing in the districts of Bengal; to compare them with those existing in other Provinces (more particularly in those areas in which the land revenue is permanently settled); and to report in what respects the administrative machinery can be improved; whether by the reduction of inordinately large charges, by the creation of new subordinate agencies, or otherwise, with the special object of bringing the executive officers of Government into closer touch with the people.

4. His Excellency in Council anticipates that much benefit will result from the investigations of this Committee. The Committee will assemble early in November 1913, and will visit such areas as may seem desirable. The Governor in Council desires that all officers in Bengal will promptly afford the Committee such information or assistance as it may require.

By order of the Governor in Council,

J. G. CUMMING,

Offg. Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

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PART I.

Preliminary.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

Appointment of Committee.

THE Bengal District Administration Committee was convened under orders of the Bengal Government contained in letter No. 4443 P.—D., dated the 23rd October 1913. The terms of reference stated therein were as follows :—

"To examine the conditions prevailing in the districts of Bengal; to compare them with those existing in other Provinces (more particularly in those areas in which the land revenue is permanently settled), and to report in what respects the administrative machinery can be improved, whether by the reduction of inordinately large charges, by the creation of new subordinate agencies, or otherwise, with the special object of bringing the executive officers of Government into closer touch with the people."

The Committee was composed of the following members :—

Hon'ble MR. E. V. LEVINGE, C.S.I., I.C.S., Member of the Executive Council, Bihar and Orissa	*President.*
MR. H. V. LOVETT, C.S.I., I.C.S., Commissioner, United Provinces,	*Members.*
MR. N. D. BEATSON BELL, C.I.E., I.C.S., Commissioner, Dacca Division,	
MR. K. C. DE, I.C.S., Collector, Rangpur,	
MR. C. E. LOW, C.I.E., I.C.S., Director of Agriculture and Industries, Central Provinces and Berar,	
Mr. E. N. BLANDY, I.C.S., Subdivisional Officer, Munshiganj, Dacca district ...	*Secretary.*

The services of Messrs. Levinge, Lovett and Low were placed at the disposal of the Government of Bengal by their respective Governments.

Tour of Committee.

2. The Committee met for the first time in Calcutta on the 10th November 1913. From the middle of November till the end of December we were engaged in making ourselves acquainted with the conditions of Eastern Bengal, visiting all the districts in the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions, and the Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur districts in Rajshahi. The two months from the beginning of January till the beginning of March 1914 were spent in visits to the Benares and Raipur districts of the United and Central Provinces, to Bankipur, Arrah and Gaya in the Province of Bihar and Orissa, to the districts of Salem and Vizagapatam in the Presidency of Madras, and to the districts of Midnapur, Birbhum, Nadia, Murshidabad and Hooghly in West Bengal. In March we made a second and shorter tour in Eastern Bengal, revisiting the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Bakarganj and Tippera, and discussing particular points in further detail with the local officers.

Method of working.

3. To enable us to cover as much ground as possible during the time at our disposal, we divided on several occasions into two or more parties, meeting afterwards to compare notes. We inspected a number of district and subdivisional offices, and made as thorough an examination as circumstances allowed, of all the details of district work, not only in Bengal, but also in the other Provinces mentioned.

We visited a number of villages in typical tracts, examined the different village institutions, and discussed their working with the people on the spot. We also studied the history of the various administrative systems of the different Provinces as described in official records.

Examination of Witnesses.

4. No enquiry, however, that covered so wide a range of subjects, and was concerned so intimately with matters of public opinion and feeling, would have been complete without a very careful consideration of the views of a large body of witnesses, representing departments of the different Governments, and many shades of unofficial opinion. In addition to ascertaining the views of some recognised political leaders, we decided to learn as much as we could from European and Indian non-officials, not only regarding matters of popular sentiment, but also regarding details of district administration. We considered that the best way of obtaining real opinions was by means of informal and private discussions, rather than by a public examination or by set questions. Partly in order to secure for those witnesses, who desired it, the option of having their evidence treated as confidential, partly because many of the subjects discussed were themselves of a confidential nature, it would in any case have been necessary to hold the majority of the sittings in private; and as it was impossible to foretell when one or other of these conditions was likely to arise, it was decided to adopt the same practice in all cases, though the witnesses themselves were under no obligation to treat the discussions as confidential, unless they so wished it. We received frequent assurances in the course of our enquiries, that this method of obtaining the views of witnesses was thoroughly appreciated by them; and we feel ourselves justified in placing on record our well-supported conviction, that under no other conditions would the genuine personal views of most of the non-officials have been so freely and sincerely put forward by them or so accurately ascertained by ourselves. We cannot leave this subject without expressing our gratification at the friendly and helpful tone which pervaded the discussions, and at the sincere efforts made by all witnesses, official and non-official, to give us their best assistance and advice in our difficult task.

Acknowledgment of assistance.

5. We also desire to record our thanks to the Governments of the Madras Presidency, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, and the Province of Bihar and Orissa, and to many officers of those Governments for the great assistance received from them in our enquiries; and also to the District and Divisional Officers and the Government of Bengal, and to various Heads of Departments, whose help and advice were, in spite of the great pressure of their own duties, put freely at our disposal.

CHAPTER II.

Historical review of Administrative Conditions.

Purpose of this Chapter.

6. We have been directed to examine the conditions prevailing in the districts of Bengal, to compare them with those existing in other Provinces and to report generally how the administration can be improved, with the special object of bringing the executive officers of Government into closer touch with the people. We understand that we are to submit our views regarding certain administrative problems of long standing and any other matters connected with district work and indicating defects which can be lessened or removed. We are further to consider whether there exist causes of economic or social discontent which admit of remedy.

Before suggesting the displacement of old arrangements by new ones and before offering opinions regarding the existence or cause of discontent, we have found it necessary to look carefully into the past; and in doing this we have been impressed by the succession of political outrages which have for some years obstructed and unsteadied the administration of certain districts. Of these outrages we must give a brief account, as a clear understanding of their nature and origin is essential for a correct appreciation of present conditions. We shall go on to describe the districts and people principally affected. We shall enumerate the peculiar difficulties which have beset the administration, and the serious disadvantages with which Bengal District Officers have to contend. We shall conclude this chapter by indicating the nature of such remedies as we are able to suggest.

Beginnings of Revolutionary Ideas.

7. A well-informed witness has told us that anti-English bitterness began in Bengal with the Ilbert Bill controversy. However this may be, and however much the clever, excitable middle classes were stirred by the extension of English education and ever closer contact with the British democracy, however much their minds were warped by misleading oratory and newspapers, it is certain that even the most advanced politicians entertained no serious revolutionary ideas, until after the varied events of the Boer War and the victories of Japan. Events in other countries have contributed to the growth of these ideas, but there can be no doubt as to how they originated.

Unfortunately for Bengal, the triumphs of Japan coincided with the opposition of the Congress leaders to Lord Curzon's educational reforms, and with the far wider and deeper troubling of the waters produced by the contemplated Partition, which was intensely resented by the Hindu political leaders in Calcutta for reasons which we need not detail. The subsequently notorious Barindra Kumar Ghose, who, together with his brother Arabinda, had fallen much under Maharashtra influence, stated in 1908 that, starting his propaganda between 1900 and 1903, he visited every district and subdivision of Bengal, preaching the cause of independence; but failing to awaken response he returned to Baroda,

deciding to appeal next time to religion as well as to patriotism. With the Partition came his desired opportunity. He and his coadjutors proclaimed the doctrine of Indian independence, and were assisted by the influence of the famous Vivekananda, who before his death in 1902 had with his *guru*, Ram Krishna, originated a great revival of Hinduism. Numerous hostels and students' messes afford evidence to confirm the assertions of reliable witnesses, that Vivekananda's books are extremely popular with the youth of Bengal. Their attraction lies in the fact that, as the Principal of a College has told us, "his preaching gave rise to Nationalism with a religious tendency." At the same time the Vivekananda Ram Krishna Mission has a purely philanthropic side, which often impels youthful enthusiasm to social service.

8. Other circumstances combined to spread a spirit of revolt among the English-knowing classes of Bengal, who are mainly Hindus. The theory that India was being gradually drained of her resources by a selfish alien Government was continuously preached, and met with wide acceptance in days of rising prices and increased demand for European comforts. For years Hindu newspapers and orators had scattered broadcast slanders of British motives and inveighed against the constitution and policy of the British Government in India. All over Bengal Anglo-Vernacular colleges and schools had sprung up, too often manned by needy, discontented teachers, bringing together masses of youths under an uninspiring curriculum and imperfect discipline. The leaders of the anti-Partition agitation were quick to perceive the use that might be made of these facile and helpless instruments, and they employed their opportunities with great effect. All through, the anti-Government movement in Bengal has recruited its forces principally from Anglo-Vernacular schools and colleges. It has in fact addressed itself mainly to capture and misuse the vague, uncritical ideas, the ardour and enthusiasm of impressionable youth. In this it has achieved a wide success, due in a large degree to the absence of an adequate British element in the Department of Public Instruction and to grave defects in the present educational system. The former has produced several consequences. One may be illustrated by the following words of an experienced educationalist, not in Government service:—"I am acquainted with teachers who have strong anti-Government economic views, largely because they have never in all their lives had private conversations with Europeans."

The Partition Agitation.

9. Originally the Partition was opposed, not only by the Indian, but by the British Press of Calcutta and by many of the large landholders of Bengal. Thus the advanced Hindu leaders were in an unusually strong position, and when the Partition came, it proved a "match," as a witness has called it, which set fire to a large quantity of combustible material. A serious campaign gradually developed, directed from Calcutta, the centre of the legal, educational and political activities of Bengali Hindus. Stories of impurities in foreign salt and sugar had been assiduously circulated. A boycott of these commodities and of foreign goods generally was proclaimed. It was announced that India must depend on her own manufactures; and various *swadeshi* companies were launched, whereby a sufficient supply of these manufactures might be secured. The boycott

is reported to have been originally advocated by a Hindu agitator from the Punjab who distinguished himself by inflammatory addresses in the students' quarter of Calcutta, but was in fact a person of no weight or importance. The idea was keenly taken up in Bengal and arrangements were made to carry it out both by persuasion and by force, the instruments being students and school-boys, numbers of whom were soon enrolled as "National Volunteers." A Hindu non-official witness has told us that these "Volunteers" were the forerunners of the "political dacoits" of later days. Their ostensible object was to promote national industries and physical culture; but in reality they were associations of youths banded together for the purpose of effecting a boycott of British goods and preparing, by drill and physical training, for the use of force where necessary, and for some vague eventual purpose. They wore badges, carried clubs and, as a witness says, "collected money for their expenses, sometimes with violence or threats." "National Schools," too, were started for those who wished to eschew all things connected with the British Government, its system of education included, and through the agency of numerous youths leaflets were distributed in which the English were denounced as "liars," "cheats" and "thieves." Stump orators and newspapers proclaimed the same doctrine, and large numbers of the Hindu English-educated middle-classes (the *bhadralok*) were led away by false rumours relating to the probable result of the Partition and carried off their feet by a whirlwind of passion and racial feeling. Hindu landholders, both big and small, were for some time sympathetic, but with few exceptions gradually fell away as the agitation increased in violence; and the whole movement was strongly resented by the Muhammadans, who formed the majority in Eastern Bengal, were very weakly represented in the public service as well as in educational institutions, and appreciated keenly the advantages of the new administrative arrangements. But the Muhammadans controlled no newspapers of importance and were altogether far less voluble than the Hindus.

10. The experiences of isolated Europeans in Eastern Bengal districts at the time when the agitation was at its height were of a nature hard to realize. Some appear to have been literally persecuted. There is no doubt that the forbearance of Government elated and encouraged the agitators, until their teachings and doings induced misguided persons to think that the days of the British Raj were numbered and that the great structure might any day vanish in clouds of confusion as inexplicably as it had appeared. It must be remembered that the whole population of Eastern Bengal and much of the population of Western Bengal had seen no troops from time immemorial. It was not surprising that many credited the absurd lies which were ceaselessly disseminated by orators, newspapers and pamphlets. But bad as all this was, there was worse behind.

Secret Societi their objects.

11. The movement was being used by secret associations of resolute fanatics for the gradual preparation of doings which, it was hoped, would shake the British Empire in India to its foundations. At Calcutta and

Dacca youths belonging to respectable and educated families, who had begun with drilling and club exercises, had passed on to swords and daggers and were studying the use of pistols and explosives. The conspirators were well supplied with money, were bound together by stringent vows, were burning with racial hatred and a firm belief that they could initiate a national rising. Public opinion of course had to be sufficiently inflamed, and public sympathy thoroughly enlisted. Thus an atmosphere would be created in which a series of startling outrages would eventually lead up to a serious rebellion. Publications were industriously circulated which, as there is conclusive evidence to show, enormously excited Hindu opinion. The most famous of these was the *Yugantar* (New Era) newspaper which from March 1906 to July 1907, when its first editor went to prison, poured forth passages exhibiting, as a Judge afterwards said, "a burning hatred of the British race." "They point out," he added, "how revolution is to be achieved. No calumny and no artifice is left out, which is likely to instil the youth of the country with the same idea." And these passages were, as the Chief Justice subsequently remarked, couched in a style "so levelled to the popular taste that street traffic was impeded in the rush of would-be purchasers." The *Yugantar* was not finally suppressed till 1908, when the Newspaper Incitement to Offences Act was passed. The mischief that this publication did is incalculable, and there were other newspapers equally malevolent, though not conducted with so much ability.

The Maniktola Conspirators.

12. Boycott was very soon found to be impracticable. *Swadeshi* enterprises were conducted neither on business principles nor with business methods; consequently they generally failed miserably. The Partition was gradually gaining popularity in Eastern Bengal, when, after long and careful preparation, the Calcutta revolutionary society broke into outrages which, terrible as they were, would have speedily multiplied, had it not been for the arrests in the Maniktola garden. The famous trial followed and ended in the conviction of 19 out of 36 accused and the disclosure of an elaborate conspiracy for securing the liberation of India through the "easily aroused and misdirected ardour and enthusiasm of youth." Only one of the convicts was over 30, some were under 20. Yet they had for two years launched on the public a highly inflammatory propaganda; they had collected arms and ammunition; they had studied bombs, and contrived two atrocious murders. The following words of the Sessions Judge show how effectively the license of the Press had assisted their purpose:—"There can be no doubt that the majority of the witnesses and probably of educated Bengalis in general are in sympathy with the accused; I do not say with their motives, but with their objects; and it is only natural that they should be. Their natural desire for independence was not likely to be weakened by the constant vilification in season and out of season of Government measures, not only by the Yellow Press, but by papers which claim to be respectable."

Religious convictions of the Leader.

13. The Chief Justice remarked of the Maniktola associates that they were "for the most part men of education, of strong religious convictions." It is important to understnd whata these religious convictions

amounted to, if we would gauge the depth of a sentiment still in operation. Barindra Kumar Ghose, the leader, was born in England. He was not a semi-educated fanatic. His faith was simply this: He assumed that foreign rule was *per se* bad for India, that it was bad for the Hindu religion and Hindu manhood. He considered that every effort should be made to get rid of the foreigners by fair means or foul. He saw that emancipation could only be a gradual process, the result of a lengthy and arduous struggle. He recognised the weakness of his countrymen and their unfitness for this struggle, but he considered that the long agony would regenerate them. Perhaps the struggle would be fruitless. But, in any case it must be undertaken. It would be a holy war.

14. Political outrages in Western Bengal were three in 1907, 21 in 1908, ten in 1909, five in 1910. After that year there were no *bhadralok* dacoities in Western Bengal. The storm-centre had shifted to the Eastern Province, so far as this, the principal method of warfare against Government, was concerned. There the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* had been started and its members had been trained gradually for action by Pulin Behari Das, once a teacher in the Dacca Government College. It was due to this man and to the associations which he formed, that Eastern Bengal gradually developed into the cockpit of the struggle. There boycott and picketing, though in time repressed, were for a number of youths, most of them school-boys and students, sons of respectable parents, the training for graver enterprises. Founding a "National School" at Dacca, Pulin and his associates circulated literature of the most poisonous kind, and drilled, at first openly with clubs and wooden swords, then secretly with real swords and daggers. "I myself," said one of our European witnesses, "saw Pulin and his people having a sham fight, and was surprised that Government allowed it." During the years 1906, 1907 and 1908 they went on to revolvers; and attracting numerous adherents, whom they bound together with solemn vows, they established a system of terrorism far and wide. Before they were prosecuted they had established 500 branches or affiliated societies, consisting mainly of educated young men and boys, many below fifteen years of age, throughout Eastern Bengal. Every now and then they had perpetrated dacoities on wealthy money-lenders or traders, with the object of collecting money for the warfare against Government. In committing these crimes, they sometimes acted with extreme violence. In securing secrecy for their plots and doings, they perpetrated two assassinations. They were carefully organised, inspired with fanatical enthusiasm, and, as the Judge who tried them subsequently remarked, "animated by a burning hatred of the English." When their papers were seized, among them was an "official" document in the shape of a notice, of which 123 copies were discovered, to the effect that, owing to the increase of branches and numbers of the *samiti*, it was necessary to divide the whole of Bengal into divisions and subdivisions and to form central *samitis* with subordinate associations. In their library was a book, *Mukti kon pathe* ("What is the path to Release?"), compiled from a series of articles in the *Yugantar*, which explained that in rebellion there are two stages—"building up popular opinion and collecting brute force." "Brute force" meant

The Dacca Anushilan Samiti.

arms, which were to be purchased by money obtained by robbery. The book further advocated the preparation of bombs and the attainment of physical strength by the youth of the country for the future struggle. Another book explained that the English were to be driven out, first by irregular fighting, and then by regular warfare. The aid of religion was invoked by a perverted use of the teaching of sacred Hindu books. As the associates extended their operations, they recruited from low class Hindus as well as from *bhadralok;* and among their papers was found a document signed by fifteen persons of ages ranging from nine to 22, and recording a vow to be bound by no tie of natural affection, until the object of the *samiti* was fulfilled.

15. The Dacca *Samiti* was nominally broken up about the end of 1908, when Pulin was deported; but, even after its dissolution, some of the associates added to its tale of violent crime by a peculiarly brutal murder. The victim was a boy named Priya Mohan Chatterjee, whose brother had belonged to the *samiti* and had given information to the police. Priya Mohan was murdered in the presence of his mother and despite her struggles to save him.

At last, some time after Pulin returned from deportation, he stood in the dock with 41 associates and was on the 7th August 1911 convicted with 35. He had, however, by then met with no small degree of success. He had spread a system of terrorism and hatred of the British far and wide among the *bhadralok;* he had shown how easy it was to outwit the police, and he had fascinated the fancies of many imaginative youths. The words used by the Judge who tried him seem applicable to all his achievements:—"The incidents which occurred in connection with it are striking instances of the power and influence of the *samiti*, which was able to anticipate the police at every point." It is obvious that enormous difficulties beset the under-staffed and for the most part under-educated police of Eastern Bengal, in dealing with the intelligent English-knowing leaders of a fanatical conspiracy, working in a country which by its natural difficulties and from the character of its inhabitants rendered pursuit and detection almost impossible; but these were hardly considered by the general public, on whom the continuous successes of the *samiti* made a great impression.

It must be added that the judicial convictions fell to 14 in the High Court, where there was also a considerable reduction of sentences. Pulin's sentence was commuted from transportation for life to imprisonment for seven years. Thus, one result of the enormous pains taken to trace all the doings and ramifications of the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* was that most of the conspirators remained at large. It was not long before the public had cause to appreciate the gravity of this misfortune.

Various political outrages.

16. The convictions of some of the Maniktola conspirators by no means put an end to outrages in or near Calcutta; and the recent discovery of a bomb factory, as well as two assassinations of loyal and zealous subordinate police officers, are the latest of a melancholy succession of incidents which we need not detail. But there were no more political dacoities in the Western districts, and the Dacca trials

were followed by a general lull. When political dacoities recommenced, it was in the Eastern districts and through the agency of some of the large number of associates of the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti*, who were still at liberty to spread mischief. It seems indeed probable that, had this association been earlier suppressed and more comprehensively and effectively dealt with, the political dacoities of the past three years would never have been. As it was, however, trouble recommenced with a series of dacoities in the Bakarganj district. Then followed the arrest of a gang of political dacoits near Comilla, and the Wari find of arms, when a quantity of ammunition, some jewellery taken in a recent dacoity and important documents were discovered. On the evening of the 14th January 1913, an informer was shot dead at Comilla in front of a leading pleader's house. No one attempted to seize the assassin, who escaped scot-free. A member of this Committee was informed by a respectable resident of the town that "the apathy of the people was most noteworthy," and that, in the informant's opinion, "about a hundred boys of the town were mixed up in the affair." About the time of the murder, great activity was shown in the dissemination of seditious pamphlets in manuscript and print throughout Eastern Bengal. The circulation of such literature has been going on at intervals ever since.

The Barisal Conspiracy.

17. On the 12th of May 1913, a complaint was lodged at Barisal before the District Magistrate of Bakarganj, against one Ramesh Chandra Acharjya and 43 other persons, under section 121A, Indian Penal Code. On the 8th September 1913, 28 of the accused were committed to the Sessions. The trial that followed has lately concluded with the discharge of all but 12 who pleaded guilty and were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. It was clearly proved that the association was a continuation of the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti* and had its headquarters at Dacca. Branch associations in regular communication with headquarters had been opened in other districts. The methods, vows and propaganda of the conspirators were similar to those of Pulin and his associates. But the gravity of the enterprise undertaken had at last dawned upon the plotters, and the necessity of enlisting the support of the Indian Army had been appreciated. At the same time, the struggle was to be carried on, partly by political dacoities perpetrated under semi-military discipline and partly by capturing schools through the teachers. One conspirator wrote from a village:—"There is no man fit to guide here. Consequently it would be well if a second master could be appointed to the local Middle School. The qualification of being Entrance-plucked is enough. If you can send a man after the *Pujas* I will appoint him."

A particular circumstance in connection with the Barisal case deserves mention. One approver was Girindra Mohan Das, son of a Deputy Magistrate with a distinguished record, now an Additional District Magistrate. Girindra, as a school-boy, was remarkable for ability and was considered deeply religious. His connection with the *samiti* began after, at the age of 17, he had matriculated in the first Division. He began with the lives of Mazzini and Garibaldi, and soaked his mind in the

writings of Vivekananda. He kept in his father's house a box containing cartridges and papers belonging to the *samiti*, silver ornaments, forming part of the loot obtained in a dacoity, and a quantity of printed seditious leaflets. His arrest and the capture of the box were entirely due to the straightforward and courageous conduct of his father, who acted with the utmost promptitude, when he found out how his son was engaged. In his confession Girindra stated that the association consisted of 500 members with headquarters at Dacca and branches at Comilla, Mymensingh and other places in Eastern Bengal. Before leaving the subject of this *samiti*, we will quote important passages from the judgment of the Sessions Judge :—"In the present case two of the foremost of the accused are the youngest. Jatin Roy, who is the youngest of all, being only 19, is said to be the most energetic of all the conspirators belonging to the district of Bakarganj. He is said to have taken part in both the Kawakuri and the Birangal dacoities, to have made his house the rendezvous of the conspirators for the Birangal dacoity and to have been an accessory to the murder of Inspector Monmohan Ghose. . . . . Ramesh Acharjya, the leader in Bakarganj, at the time of his arrest was only 21 years of age. . . . . Misery is introduced into homes that are otherwise happy and contented. Both the approvers in the present case are instances of young men who have been led against their natural inclination to become accomplices to acts of violence. Secret murders and dacoities committed against helpless people in far-away villages are articles of the conspirators' creed ; and from a passage in the 'questions-letter' exhibited in the case and attributed to Sailesh Mukharji, one of the confessing accused, it would appear that wholesale massacre, presumably of Europeans, was part of the conspirators' programme."

Madaripur Dacoities.

18. While the Barisal conspirators were under trial, a series of dacoities were committed in Madaripur, a subdivision of the adjoining district of Faridpur. For this a number of boys and youths, High and Middle School pupils of various ages, were arrested. Madaripur is endowed with a large number of Anglo-Vernacular secondary schools. It was alleged that the dacoits acted on the instigation of a Calcutta student from the Bangabasi College. The accused were under trial for a considerable period and have just been discharged, as the Crown has abandoned the prosecution. The witnesses have apparently been terrorised into altering or withdrawing their original statements.

Some particulars regarding political crimes in Bengal.

19. The large proportion of political dacoities, outrages, and murders which have passed unpunished is particularly noteworthy. Of 21 murders (three committed during the perpetration of dacoities), 17 have been committed with absolute impunity ; and for eight assassinations (one of an informer, one of a witness, and six of subordinate Police Officers), accomplished since January the 31st, 1910, no penalty whatever has been exacted. A determined attempt, too, was made on the 1st of September 1910 to shoot another Police Officer, who was wounded. There again the criminals escaped justice. Now and then gangs of dacoits have been brought to book for a succession of misdeeds ; but particular dacoities have generally passed off without interruption or

arrests. In the Mymensingh district there were in 1913 three political dacoities and an assassination of a Police Inspector, for which not a single person has been punished, and yet this district has been under a good Police Superintendent. The papers relating to one of these dacoities disclose the following facts :—

The dacoity occurred at about 8-30 or 9 P.M. on the 16th of August 1913. There was a full moon. Dacoits armed with guns, with which they fired about 15 or 16 shots, looted the house of Mukhtar Ashutosh Saha, about six miles from the police-station. Five or six dacoits armed apparently with pistols, kept guard outside the house. They shot Gadu Sheikh, the watchman, and wounded two other men. By their language they were suspected to be *bhadralok* of Bikrampur, Dacca district, and they were all young. The complainant was threatened with knife and dagger. Another man was wounded. On a whistle being sounded, the dacoits assembled and marched rapidly away, firing occasionally to the rear and wounding another man. Two other men were slightly wounded by pellets. The dacoits retreated to the Dacca district. The property stolen consisted of Rs. 8,888 in cash and currency notes and of ornaments worth Rs. 11,039 (the complainant's figures). It was ascertained that the Head Master of a certain Middle English School had been absent for some days, and he was suspected. There were three Government guns in the village, but the holders thereof made no use of them. A Bengali novel, *Nirmala*, was found in the boat used by the dacoits. The police suspected the criminals to be some young *bhadralok*, who had been appointed as teachers of schools in a neighbouring district, giving false names and addresses.

It may be incidentally noted that when a political dacoity is committed in any of these districts, and no trace is left of the identity of the perpetrators, the doings of every one of the many suspects in the district concerned and in neighbouring districts at the time of the occurrence have to be ascertained. Thus every undetected political dacoity causes a great deal of work all round, and the time which the police have to give to their ordinary duties is seriously curtailed.

The victims of the dacoities have been, with one exception, wealthy Hindus,—money-lenders as a rule,—who live in isolated homesteads, the only approaches to which are often through swamps or water. Persons of this description do not as a rule meet with much sympathy from their neighbours. Occasionally, however, there have been dacoities which might well provoke general consternation, such as the Rajendrapur train outrage in 1909, when young *bhadralok*, armed with revolvers and daggers, took Rs. 23,000 belonging to a Hindu firm, brutally stabbing the custodian and other persons.

Political Criminals.

20. We have briefly outlined the history of political crime in this Presidency. The criminals have generally come of peaceable fathers belonging to peaceable Hindu castes and occupying respectable positions; very often they have been students or school-boys. But their callousness, their indifference to human suffering, their want of ordinary moral scruple have amazed persons long acquainted with Bengal. Few have been in personal need of money, for the weapons they procure and

the explosives which some manufacture clearly indicate a measure of pecuniary support. They have, almost without exception, belonged to the *bhadralok*, a class which will be described further on, and they have generally been influenced by perverted idealism, inculcated by the contrivances of an inner circle of Revolutionaries who understand how damaging such outrages so frequently unpunished must be to the good name of any Government. The object of these men is to sap the foundations of British rule in every possible way until, when Britain is seriously embarrassed in Europe, India will, as they imagine, rise and shake off a rule which she has ceased to respect. They have taught their pupils to discount ordinary morality and natural affection, to "disbelieve in human intelligence," to despise anything that savours of the materialism of Europe and to seek inspiration from a "Divine Energy," whereby they may prepare themselves to take part in a mighty struggle. The campaign, which has been abandoned by many of its original promoters, has developed by slow stages from Calcutta and Dacca. First came poisonous newspapers and the harangues of stump-orators; next boycott, picketing and the dissemination of seditious pamphlets; then training in arms and the first enterprises which satisfied a taste for excitement and proved generally easy; and finally the waging of a subterranean, intermittent warfare against Government by means of murderous conspiracies and organised dacoity. The sequence is instructive. The conspiracies receive careful attention from the Special Branch of the police. The theatre of the dacoities has for some years been Eastern Bengal, and we purpose to describe carefully general conditions in that area, partly for this reason, but mainly because, while Western Bengal is physically on the whole similar to Bihar and the adjacent districts of the United Provinces, Eastern Bengal is largely a country by itself, presenting not only in a marked degree those problems which are offered by the rest of the Presidency, but also special problems of its own.

Eastern Bengal. The facilities which it affords for political dacoity.

21. Those members of this Committee who have previously been unacquainted with Eastern Bengal, are convinced that no one who has not travelled over its rural areas is likely to grasp its difficulties. Communications are more precarious, more scanty and more inefficient than those of any part of India known to us. Traversed by mighty rivers and tributary streams, visited by abundant rains, these Eastern districts are mainly a water country, which yields rich harvests of rice and jute to a teeming population, partly concentrated in a few towns, but mainly scattered over a multitude of villages. The villages, often close to marshes or winding along the banks of some tortuous stream, generally consist of scattered homesteads, built on whatever rising ground may be available. Often the houses are hidden in thickets of bamboos, fruit-trees and undergrowth. In the rains, vast tracts of land are completely submerged; the houses, each on its plot of naturally or artificially raised land, stand up like islands in the flood; and only a few of the more important roads are out of water. Boats are the ordinary means of transit, and markets spring up on the banks of waterways. Even in the drier weather the country is intersected by streams and creeks. It is easy for wary dacoits to choose their time and prey, to effect their purpose and to disappear, leaving no tracks behind.

22. Muhammadans and Hindu Namasudras form the large majority of the population of Eastern Bengal. But these are generally cultivators, and indifferent to political movements that do not affect their personal interests. In the days of the boycott, the opponents of Government tried to bully the Muhammadans into participation in the movement, but signally failed. Since then, the latter have been carefully left alone. Both they and the Namasudras have profited greatly by the rise of prices within recent years and by the money poured into the country through the jute trade. They are displaying a growing taste for English education, but those who dwell in rural tracts are generally backward, stolid and absorbed in their personal concerns. As a Muhammadan gentleman has informed us, they "take no interest in the dacoities," because the sufferers are always Hindus.

Different classes of its people. Reasons for a general backwardness in co-operating with Government against political criminals.

But, while the lower classes are well-off, the principal landlords find that their money will not go nearly as far as it used to, and the minor landlords and permanent tenure-holders feel the pinch of narrowed circumstances. For the rents of the actual occupiers, the tillers of the soil, are fixed by law to a degree unusual elsewhere, and all the superior interests in land are sold and resold, let and relet with bewildering frequency. Thus the unprecedented prices of agricultural produce hardly affect the tenure-holders and zamindars, while those who draw fixed incomes, either from their landed interests or from professional sources or from both, have to contend with higher prices, as well as with a rising standard of comfort due to modern tendencies and the increasing prosperity of the cultivators. The majority of small landlords and permanent tenure-holders are Hindu *bhadralok*, represented by the three leading castes of Brahmans, Kayasthas or Baidyas, descended from the privileged subjects of the old Hindu kingdom, or the clerks and revenue-collectors who served the Moghals. These persons have always despised manual labour and gravitated towards Government service and the learned professions. They have predominated and still predominate in medicine, in teaching, at the Bar and in Government service; but their connection with land has dwindled considerably within the past 30 years. Within the same period they have received considerable accessions from the Hindu trading castes. Rising prices, growing competition, increasing numbers have combined to narrow their circumstances, and many of them have sold or let tenures to money-lenders or inferior tenure-holders. They have striven hard to provide their sons with education which will procure employment, by establishing Anglo-Vernacular schools throughout the country; but, as these schools have imparted nothing but an indifferent literary education, they have largely failed to fit their pupils for careers which are regarded as satisfactory. Posts and avenues of employment have indeed greatly increased in Bengal; and if every young man who wants work were content to take what he could get and be thankful, there would be few left idle in the market-place. But, after careful enquiries in all directions, we have decided that the greater part of the economic difficulty at present is, that many young men rate the value of School or College English education much higher than does the average employer. Graduates and those who have passed the Intermediate Examination in Arts are very reluctant to serve away from

towns, and decline to take any post which they consider an inadequate recognition of the credential, which has rewarded their laborious efforts. Thus they lose chances and sometimes spend months or years loitering about some district headquarters, and living on the joint family to which they belong. As a general rule, they sooner or later accommodate themselves to circumstances, but often with an exceedingly bad grace and with a strong sense of injury received from Government, the universal scapegoat. So much for the successful in examination. The unsuccessful and those who never proceed to examination, nevertheless generally consider that the mere fact of their English education places them well above the performance of manual labour or the acceptance of salaries which content relatives who have not learnt English at all. They frequently end by declining upon some poorly paid post which just enables them to live.

Years ago, all the dissatisfied would have been materially assisted by the joint family funds, and even now there is what the West would consider singular unselfishness and generosity in joint families; but individualism is making way, families are increasing, and money will not go as far as it used to. There can be no doubt that many of the *bhadralok* live in circumstances with which they cannot but be discontented. That this discontent tends to produce social and political unrest is certain, and the police papers of various well-known districts show that numbers of political suspects are persons of scanty means. At the same time it frequently happens that preoccupation in what are called politics is the reason for failure in the practical business of life; and the best informed and most carefully considered evidence unanimously states that the converts to revolutionary doctrines are generally impelled, not by pecuniary need, but by mistaken idealism. There is, however, no doubt that such persons enjoy support and sympathy from their caste-fellows, which they would not obtain were it not for the existence of considerable economic discontent among the latter. Nor is there any doubt that, as the output of the English-educated increases, and it seems likely to increase with phenomenal rapidity, the discontent will also increase, unless many of these English-educated considerably alter their ideas. An education which will offer some alternative to the course for the Matriculation Examination is urgently needed. Lessons in discipline, self-restraint and a sense of proportion are also needed. The most common type of Anglo-Vernacular school will give little of these. A better type is required. It must be remembered, too, that Bengalis begin the battle of life considerably handicapped. The youth who might be content with a salary quite sufficient for the maintenance of a bachelor, has a wife and possibly children or poor relations dependent on him. Boys are men earlier than in England, and feel pecuniary pressure earlier in life than do Englishmen. How to improve the prospects of the *bhadralok* is indeed a thorny problem and all its difficulties must be clearly recognised.

23. In some parts of India, the influence of the literary castes is, in the villages, far inferior to the influence of the castes which contain a sobering element of pensioned soldiers of the Indian Army. There are no such persons in Bengal villages, none who by heredity are likely to fight rather than submit to lawless depredations. Elsewhere, too, the large landed proprietors might well be expected to interest themselves

in suppressing bands of robbers. But in Bengal the big landlords do little or nothing, partly because they are generally absentees, partly because they are not the sufferers and have no affection for those who are, the plundered money-lenders. The protection of these rests, they consider, with Government. We have, too, met with some evidence of a disposition to sympathise with the criminals, among English-educated persons holding good positions; and passages in newspapers have seemed to us to indicate an altogether insufficient appreciation of the need of strenuously combating the cowardly and abominable propaganda which subsists on the perversion of students and school-boys, and devotes its energy to assassinations of brave and loyal servants of Government and to dacoities committed on unguarded and helpless persons.

Terrorism.

24. So far, then, the officers of Government have, as a general rule, received no practical co-operation from the public in fighting political crime. This is, however, partly due to terrorism, striking instances of which have come to our notice. We may mention a few.

In the Dacca stabbing case although a man had been murdered in the heart of the town before a number of persons who, as the Commissioner reported, "must have been fully aware of the details and of the perpetrator," it was found impossible to bring into Court one single reliable witness, and the Magistrate recorded:—"Some powerful influence, either of terror or persuasion, has been at work in a manner hostile to the prosecution." In another well-known case, a Commissioner of wide experience reported to Government that excommunication, social boycott, threats of murder, arson and other injury had been applied to the Crown witnesses with great success; and we may be sure that the above were among the mildest methods employed by the Dacca *Anushilan Samiti*. In the Khulna gang case the Magistrate's committal order stated that "the fear shown by the great majority of witnesses was one of the most remarkable features of the case. It was obvious that many of them only spoke with reluctance, while a considerable number showed such extreme nervousness at the sight of the accused, when shown to them for identification, that they made but the faintest effort to identify any of them. . . . . The demeanour of the witnesses was a striking testimony of the terror the gang had inspired."

A Hindu pleader in a country district said to us:—"We want the English Government. I have met very few who do not want the English Government. . . . . We are willing to co-operate with Government in regard to dacoities; but we cannot suggest anything. We once went to the house of the Superintendent of Police, for a conference about political outrages, and seven or eight of us got threatening letters in Bengali next day." In December after the Madaripur dacoities the Subdivisional Officer told us:—"The general feeling is now all in our favour and against the dacoits. Even those who have a personal interest in the accused condemn these dacoities. But there is a terror throughout the whole public, and they are afraid openly to assist us." That this was no exaggeration of the state of affairs has

just been conclusively proved by the entire breakdown of this most important prosecution, in consequence of the terrorism from which some witnesses had obviously suffered.

Before leaving this subject, we must express our warm admiration of the conduct of Hindu officers in Bengal as a class, particularly police officers, throughout these troubles. The revolutionary movement in this Presidency has been all along a Hindu movement; but the conduct of these men has been exemplary. Some have given their lives for the British Government, while many have suffered bitter social persecution.

Eastern Bengal. Administration before the Partition.

25. Thus the nature of the country, the conditions obtaining among different sections of its inhabitants, an extraordinary terrorism have all combined against the Magistrates and Police. Until very recently they have been unsupported by any show of military force, and only of late years have they been at all numerically sufficient for administrative needs.

The old Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Province was an impossible charge, and the Eastern districts were the least favoured portion thereof. Service in them was unpopular, and it was tacitly assumed that they could be safely administered by a minimum of Covenanted officers and at a minimum of cost; Government buildings were mean and inadequate; police-stations were not only few and far between, but frequently miserable structures. Altogether this difficult country, the most thickly populated rural part of India, was administratively starved. Notwithstanding the badness of the communications, the numbers of the inhabitants, the restlessness and growing competition among the most intelligent section, some district areas were and are unusually large. Now and then proposals had been made for reducing them; but Government must have been preoccupied with more immediately pressing matters, for nothing was done. The necessity for partitioning the Mymensingh district was originally represented nearly 40 years ago. Other desirable measures had been from time to time proposed, with no result. There were no troops, no mounted police, and a remarkable paucity of Civil Servants. It was the exception to find a Covenanted officer in charge of a subdivision. The total population of the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions is 17,432,140. In parts of the Dacca district it exceeds 1,900 to the square mile. Yet the total number of Covenanted civil officers serving in the two Divisions was in October 1904 only 25, of whom four were Indians, and in January 1905 only 31, of whom seven were Indians. In the same area there were in January 1905 only 12 British police officers. The principle that authority should be in view was largely ignored, and of force held in reserve there was no visible indication. One consequence, moreover, of an inadequate staff must necessarily be too frequent transfers of officers from one district to another and too slender acquaintance with the affairs of any district. For reasons which will appear from a subsequent chapter, there was little to encourage touring, and altogether the people on their side had rarely an opportunity of forming a distinct impression of any particular officer.

Eastern Bengal. Administration after the Partition.

26. Thus there was little to obstruct the spread of anti-Government propaganda over these long-neglected districts. Reform, indeed, began with the Partition; but, when the new Eastern Bengal Government came into existence, there were only 92 Europeans in all departments of Government to supervise the work of 14 districts, containing 26 millions of people. Fifty Military police at Dacca represented the reserve force available for the support of the Administration; and the ordinary Civil police were everywhere below strength. Yet the local Administration were fighting a most difficult battle in a most difficult country against by far the most serious agitation in India since the Mutiny. The centre of the movement was at Calcutta, outside their jurisdiction. They wanted time, men and money to strengthen their forces, meet their enemy and effect the reforms that were so badly and so widely needed. Only very gradually were their necessities supplied and much money was required for the conversion of Dacca into a Provincial capital. Even so late as the 18th May 1908, the Chief Secretary, when proposing important educational reforms, thus addressed the Government of India :—"Every branch of education, every department of the administration makes urgent demands upon the revenues of this ill-equipped Province, and the normal income barely suffices to meet the necessary items of expenditure."

Even in January 1908, there were only 39 Covenanted Civil Servants in the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions, of whom nine were young officers without full powers. At the same time there were, exclusive of the Principal and pupils of the Dacca Police School (five in number), four Military Police officers and 12 Civil Police officers in the two divisions. Districts and police-station circles remained unaltered, in spite of the urgent need of creating manageable charges. When all these facts are considered, it is hardly surprising that district authorities met with small success in dealing with organised associations of educated criminals, who employed bombs and revolvers in a country mainly destitute of communications, and enjoyed the sympathies of widely circulated newspapers and of persons well acquainted with the weaknesses of our legal system.

Lately the Police have been materially reinforced and areas of police circles are being reduced to a convenient size. We may, however, observe that the new police-station circles, as recently arranged in Dacca and other Eastern districts, are still too large when the nature of the country is considered. We trust, too, that it may be found possible to increase the number of Assistant and Deputy Superintendents of Police at subdivisional headquarters in these districts.

Position on the reunion of the Provinces.

27. Gradually the administration strengthened in both the Western and Eastern Provinces, as, with the intensifying of the revolutionary movement, the Imperial and Provincial Governments adopted more effective measures for dealing with it. Civil and Police cadres were increased. Criminal associations were prosecuted. Comprehensive proposals for reforming Anglo-Vernacular schools, which had too often tended to become centres of anti-Government disturbance, were submitted by both Administrations, and elaborate schemes for appointing Chaukidari Circle

Officers and for developing industrial and technical education were prepared by the Government of Eastern Bengal. Although the past had left one evil legacy, general prospects were steadily brightening, when the annulment of the Partition remanded all schemes of reform for further consideration under altered conditions. It did not stop revolutionary crimes, as these were contrived by persons who had learnt to cherish no object other than the overthrow of British rule in India. Outrages recommenced, special police measures were taken to combat them, and a review of the whole situation made it apparent that, whether there be political unrest or not, the solution of some long-standing administrative problems could no longer be postponed. The nature of these we need only briefly indicate in this chapter.

Difficulties of District Officers: their relations with the people: suggestions for facilitating their task.

28. It is noticeable that the districts which have given most trouble are particularly large and onerous charges. We have no hesitation in thinking that, had these districts years ago been divided into manageable areas, the campaign of sedition and dacoity would have met with less success. The career of Pulin Behari Das and his associates, their deliberate and gradual preparations, their long roll of audacious crimes, would have been impossible in a well-managed, compact district, divided into police circles of a convenient size and surrounded by other districts similarly organised. But, apart from such considerations, the fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that a District Officer or Police Superintendent, who is over-worked and borne down by a load of office and inspection duties, cannot reasonably be expected either to become well acquainted with the people of his district or to exercise over his subordinates the watchful and sympathetic control that is essential to good administration. Still less can he be expected to devise improvements or ascertain how progress is attainable. Such matters require careful and deliberate reflection, and for this he has no time. The subordinate staff suffer with him, and it is idle to expect officers overburdened by routine work to spare much time for tours, or for interviews with people whom they are not obliged to see. Their days are entirely occupied with endeavouring to keep pace with those duties which they *must* perform.

"The people," said a non-official witness, "don't see enough of Englishmen. They don't see enough of the District Magistrate or of the Superintendent of Police. When they do so, and know them, and are on pleasant terms with them (and pleasant terms can only come from seeing and knowing), all goes well. I know that from my own experience. Personal influence is everything in Bengal." This personal influence cannot be easily established by officers oppressed with desk-work and burdened with the control of densely peopled areas, far too wide to traverse without an impossible expenditure of time. It is true that, even as things are, there is plenty of friendly intercourse between District Officers and their visitors at headquarters, and when British Officers go on tour, they are well received in rural areas, for the attitude of the country-people has been correctly described by an experienced onlooker:—"These people, so far as I can see, the lower classes, believe in the English official. They swear him to be honest and just right through." But care must be taken to see that

charges are of manageable area, and to devise a satisfactory executive agency subordinate to the Subdivisional Officer, for by these means opportunities for extending personal influence will be materially increased, the time of some District Magistrates will no longer be entirely occupied in daily routine, and they will have, what they so much require, leisure for thinking out and developing lines of action which will initiate progress and tend to counteract malignant influences.

29. We have referred to the need of an executive agency subordinate to the Subdivisional Officer. There are in Bengal no subordinate executive and magisterial officers corresponding to the Tahsildars of the United and Central Provinces, who belong to the people, live among the people, are embarrassed little by case-work and are continuously in contact with representatives of all classes. There are of course resident Subdivisional Officers; but these are generally occupied with case-work; their charges are heavy; they are constantly transferred; their tours are rather rushes out and back than marches from one village to another; and they cannot, in the nature of things, be as much in touch with local feelings and grievances as are good Tahsildars. Moreover, there is in Bengal no record of land-rights continuously maintained, which in other Provinces brings the country-people of all classes into frequent touch with Executive Officers, and helps these in their turn towards a first-hand knowledge of rural life and conditions.

Thus even in charges of moderate population and area, Bengal District Officers do not possess advantages which District Officers possess in other Provinces.

On the other hand, while in the latter legal practitioners are comparatively few in number and generally work at district headquarters, in Bengal there is an overgrown Bar, not only at the district headquarters, but at every subdivisional station and at every outlying munsifi. This overgrowth of the Bar has been mentioned with regret by many witnesses, most of all by witnesses who belong to the legal profession. We fully recognise that many members thereof, particularly the older pleaders and mukhtars, are animated by friendly feelings to Government and the local officers, are helpful in the work of administration and do all in their power to promote peace. But it is inevitable that in every overgrown Bar there should be a section which is needy and disappointed, and wherever such a section exists, idle and unhappy, it drifts to the side of discontent. When to this element in the population are added a dissatisfied rural educated class and an abundance of schools among which have been found some of the most virulent centres of political infection, the desirability of establishing among the people representatives of Government, apart from the Police, becomes at once apparent. The introduction of officers of the Tahsildar class in connection with a system of village administration, which would necessarily bring them into frequent contact with the country-people, would supply such an influence, and assist District Officers by a subordinate agency of value proved elsewhere.

General plan of his Report.

30. In subsequent chapters, we shall state and explain the proposals which we think most likely to achieve this and other desirable administrative objects. We trust, too, that, if accepted, some of these proposals will have the effect of enlisting the help of the chaukidari Union panchayats in general administration, by giving them control over and effective interest in the well-being and sanitation of their villages. We shall, moreover, have some suggestions to offer in regard to secondary Anglo-Vernacular schools. The part which these institutions have played and must always play with regard to social conditions and district administration in Bengal has deeply impressed us. Finally, we shall discuss in detail economic discontent and possible remedies. This difficult subject calls for particular consideration. For there is widespread economic discontent among a portion of the middle-classes, which, stimulated by racial feeling and defective education, must tend to produce serious and permanent disaffection. The reasons for this discontent we have done our best to explore. If any of the remedies which we suggest be adopted, and contribute to what must in any case be the very slow and gradual solution of a problem of enormous difficulty, we shall be more than content.

PART II.

Division of Administrative Areas.

CHAPTER III.

The excessive size of certain Districts and Subdivisions.

Introductory.

31. The essential differences between Bengal, especially Eastern Bengal, and the rest of India are not such as can be deduced from mere statistics, striking as the statistics of such a tract undoubtedly are. It has been necessary, therefore, to attempt a somewhat detailed description of this remarkable country, or at any rate of the natural peculiarities which affect its administration. The impression made on the non-Bengal members of the Committee was a very strong one, and they are fully convinced of the danger of basing proposals about Bengal on experience derived from other parts of India. In particular, they were especially struck by the immense population, the large proportion of educated persons, the high degree of agricultural prosperity and the extraordinary volume of work that has consequently to be dealt with by the district establishments. Figures will be quoted further on in this chapter to show the great expansion that has taken place during the last 30 years in the volume of work in some of the district and subdivisional offices in Eastern Bengal, and the increase in the number of criminal cases brought before the courts. Statistics prove that the duration of criminal trials is greater than formerly, in spite of the fact that in most subdivisions the magisterial staff has been doubled, and in some cases even trebled. But the multiplication of the gazetted staff of a district does not imply a corresponding relief to the District Officer; on the contrary, it necessitates increased inspection and supervision, and in many directions adds to his work and responsibility. At a very early stage in their acquaintance with the Province, the Committee were fully persuaded of the importance of the suggestion contained in the terms of reference, that the reduction of inordinately large charges might be needed, to enable the officers of Government to obtain a closer touch with the people. But the creation of a new district or subdivision entails heavy expenditure, both recurring and non-recurring, and for this reason we have very carefully examined all the proposals that have been suggested to us, and have recommended only such as appear to us to be absolutely and immediately necessary for the efficient administration of the districts.

Peculiar difficulties of Eastern Bengal Districts.

32. It is frequently asserted that in Bengal the executive officers of Government are less in touch with the people than elsewhere in India. It is inevitable under the circumstances that it should be so; but, if it is necessary to admit this, it is no less necessary to explain at the same time that this want of touch with the people is in no way due to any defect in the officers themselves, but to the disheartening and well-nigh impossible conditions under which they have to work. In his zealous efforts for the welfare of his district, the District Officer in Bengal is in no way behind his brother officers in other Provinces in India; but it has to be recognized that by the force of circumstances

and through no fault of his own there are many duties which he must neglect, not because he does not realize their importance, but because he has not the time to take them up.

Opinion of the Collector of Dacca.

33. This is forcibly brought out by the Collector of Dacca in a letter dated 31st December 1913. He writes—

"As matters stand at present, we are neglecting the work which matters most, because neglect does not show, and in order that we may do the work which is intrinsically of no greater importance, but which must have the preference, because it comes more immediately to the notice of Government. It is because the mass of the people are so submissive to authority, and because they cherish an old belief that the British Government desires to do justice, that they do not make their voices heard, when the District Officer fails to save them from such delay in obtaining justice in the criminal courts as amounts to a denial of justice, because he has no time to control the work of the courts; when the District Officer fails to give them a fair price for their homestead land acquired for a public purpose, because he has not time to control the work of the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector; when the District Officer allows the holdings of khas mahal raiyats to be sold and fall into the hands of mahajans, because through want of time he exercises no control over collections, and allows an alternation of slackness and undue severity; and when the District Officer fails to redress the just grievances of raiyats in wards' estates, because he is defeated by the volume of the complaints and the passive resistance of the estate subordinates. None of these defects in the administration come very prominently before the notice of Government, because the people do not often complain; but the cumulative effect of these omissions, though slow, cannot fail to be far-reaching; and there is grave danger that the effect may become more rapid, now that ill-disposed people have set to work to persuade the masses that Government does not care for their interests. When the charge of a District Officer is too heavy, these are the duties which he will in most cases neglect, and it has been so in the Dacca district."

And further on he writes—

"At the cost of several mistakes due to hasty despatch of important business I have found time to discover many errors, but I have not found time to correct them; this can be done only by assiduous attention to individual cases, for which attention I have not found sufficient time. I cannot say that I have done more than increase the work by stirring up questions which I have not had time to settle."

Mr. Birley is an exceptionally able and zealous officer. His experience is that of many other officers who are serving in the heavier districts in Eastern Bengal. It is impossible that such conditions, tending as they do to lower, by the force of example, the general standard of administration throughout the Province, should be allowed to continue. It is essential that measures should be taken to remove the underlying causes, or at least to minimize their effects.

Increase of work in past 40 years.

34. The increase in the work of a large Eastern Bengal district during the last 40 years is very striking, and a consideration thereof will in our opinion clearly show that the control of the district organization is beyond the power of a single officer. The partition of the Mymensingh and Midnapur districts was first proposed in 1876; the figures for 1873 where available, have been selected by us as a basis of comparison,

that being the year to which most of the figures for this district given in Hunter's well-known work relate. The Mymensingh district has been selected as an admittedly extreme case; but a perusal of the statistics presented at the end of this chapter will show that the gap which separates it from Dacca, Midnapur and Bakarganj is not very wide.

Between the years 1873 and 1913, the population of the Mymensingh district increased from 2,349,917 to 4,526,422. Between 1883 and 1912 the number of criminal cases brought to trial and of witnesses examined in them rose from 4,588 and 16,973 to 11,494 and 36,270, respectively. The greatness of the increase in work is by no means merely in proportion to the above figures. The spread of jute cultivation and the increase in the price of this and of other crops added greatly to the wealth of the population. The number of pupils in Primary Schools between 1873 and 1913 had risen from 4,800 to 77,576, and of pupils at High and Middle Schools from 3,952 to 30,514. The number of pleaders in the district in 1872 was 52; when we visited Mymensingh we were informed that at the headquarters there were nearly 300 pleaders and barristers. At one subdivision, Kishorganj, there were between 50 and 60 pleaders; and at an outlying munsifi in the same subdivision there were some 20 more. The total strength of the Bar in the Mymensingh district consists of 403 pleaders and barristers, with 384 mukhtars and 96 revenue agents. All but a few of these expect to make a living by their profession; and we were informed that the villages are full of touts who incite the people to litigation. Given a population which has gained so much in wealth and intelligence; add the great increase in facilities for litigation offered by Government; take into consideration also the ever-rising influence of Bar on Bench; and the complication of criminal work, apart from any mere increase in the number of cases, may perhaps be imagined.

Those members of our Committee from other Province who sat by the Magistrate in his court, or by the Collector at his desk, noticed especially how matters which in less advanced Provinces are settled by the exchange of a word or two, or by a few strokes of the pen, in Bengal necessitate long argument, careful reference to rules, and a detailed order in writing.

The Committee have no wish to enter into any comparison of the working of the courts now and forty years ago, from which, indeed, they are precluded by the terms of their reference. But we are bound to bring to notice the growing influence of the Bar in increasing the work of the courts. This matter was frequently mentioned by witnesses, especially by non-officials. One witness, indeed, thought that the policy of closer relations between officials and non-officials might be overdone, and that the social influence of the Bar over Deputy Magistrates was becoming stronger, and contributed greatly to the increasing reluctance of the courts to dispose promptly of obviously weak pleas or cases. There is a general consensus of opinion, which could, in one district at any rate, be supported by statistics, that the length of time taken in the disposal of case-work has increased far more than the growth in the number or complexity of cases would warrant, and among the reasons assigned for this, is the fact that the Bar has gained influence at the cost of the Bench. Not to overload this part of our Report with

statistics, we will quote no further figures, save those for civil litigation, which stood as under:—

1873	... 16,680
1883	... 23,207
1912	... 54,616

It must of course be remembered that in Bengal rent-suits are included in civil suits, but even making full allowance for this, the figures are very striking, and are a measure of the increase, not merely in the civil work, but also in the wealth, intelligence, and economic activity of the district. Obviously a district where the people cannot manage their own affairs without filing 54,616 civil suits must need a much more elaborate administrative machine than was the case when 16,680 suits used to suffice.

Increase of work and responsibility without increase in supervising staff.

35. The more complicated economic, fiscal, and political relations that arise from increasing wealth and civilization are accompanied in some countries by an increase in the efficiency of the various forms of municipal responsibility. But in most parts of India, where economic and social development have in some respects altogether outrun the political evolution of the country, this has not yet been the case; and every forward step which the people are helped to take, adds to the responsibility of the controlling staff. The increase in every branch of the Collector's work, which can be clearly shown by statistics, illustrates this principle. The work of the less responsible posts in the district staff may be, without much difficulty, expressed in numbers of cases or letters, in terms of areas checked or revenue collected; and it has always been far easier to make out a case for another clerk or Sub-Registrar, or even for another Munsif or Deputy Magistrate, than to induce Government to create another subdivision, still more another district; and we find, therefore, that this heavy increase in work has been met, so far as the subordinate staff are concerned, by a corresponding addition to their numbers. Since 1873 the Assistant and Joint Magistrates of the Mymensingh District have been increased from 2 to 6; the Deputy Magistrates from 5 to 10, the Munsifs from 12 to 25; and the Assistant Superintendents of Police from 2 to 5, including an Additional Superintendent and 2 Deputy Superintendents. But an addition to the subordinate staff must inevitably entail a greater strain on the supervising agency. In some places the improvement of communications may palliate the difficulty; but there has been little help of this kind in Eastern Bengal. Very much the same type of Collector holds charge of a district like Mymensingh now as 30 years ago; either the work then was absurdly light, or it must now be intolerably heavy. The appointment of an Additional Magistrate does not affect the question at issue, for, as we shall show in the following paragraph, an Additional Magistrate may take away some of the work of the Collector, but cannot add to his power of control; the single officer to whom is entrusted the supervision of the whole complicated machinery of the district staff must obviously for some years past have had much more work than he can possibly accomplish. There are certain things, such

as the supervision of the courts, the disposal of case-work, of current references and correspondence, the control of existing institutions, that, though by no means necessarily constituting the most important part of his work, yet make the most insistent demand on his time. This class of duties has assumed such proportions, that they leave the Collector hardly any leisure for other tasks, with the result that the latter, which are often of deeper necessity and more essential to the true welfare and advancement of the people, are left undone. We allude to such matters as the supervision of education; personal intercourse with the people; the collection and assimilation of detailed economic, social and political knowledge, and the elaboration of schemes which require such knowledge. The neglect of these is not so readily apparent or so easily discerned by an official inspection; but sooner or later some deep-seated evil is bound to make its appearance in the administrative organization from this weakening of its vital impulse. We have dwelt more particularly on the necessity for the relief of the Collector, the officer with whose functions our Report is principally concerned; but the pressure of the work is almost as great in the case of other officers. The District Judge is seldom able to visit his outlying courts, and he has to rely on the Additional Judge to deal with many of the appeals that come from them; the Civil Surgeon rarely inspects a tithe of his outlying dispensaries; and the Superintendent of Police has to delegate an undesirably large portion of his authority to an Additional Superintendent, an expedient to which the objections taken in the case of Additional District Magistrates apply with equal force.

Alternative proposals: Additional District Magistrate.

36. Several remedies other than the partition of districts have been suggested. The first is a remedy which has been actually tried in Mymensingh, Midnapur, Dacca, Bakarganj, and Tippera, namely, the appointment of an Additional District Magistrate under section 10 (2) of the Criminal Procedure Code. These officers have also been invested with the powers of a Collector under various revenue enactments. We have examined the working of this experiment in all the districts named above, and we have come to the unanimous conclusion that it is an eminently unsatisfactory solution of the problem. The method of distribution of work between the two officers varies greatly in different districts, but one of two things always happens: either the Additional Magistrate sinks to the level of an expensive Joint Magistrate; or there is a most deplorable division of authority, division of knowledge, and division of administrative grasp. The whole idea of "two Kings in Brentford" is foreign to the recognized scheme of Indian administration, and we are satisfied that it surpasses the wit of man to conduct this dual system in a satisfactory manner. In fact it is the opinion of all who have seen the inner working of the experiment that it has been a signal failure. It has created administrative confusion and inefficiency, without in any way bringing the district officer into closer touch with the people.

Separation of Judicial and Executive.

37. Another remedy which has been suggested is what is popularly known as the "Separation of Judicial and Executive." In the terms

of reference this remedy has been excluded from our consideration, and we need not discuss it further. We may say, however, to avoid misapprehension, that we have not seen any scheme of this nature which would obviate the necessity for the partition of the unwieldy districts of Bengal.

Decentralization of Local Self-Government

38. In Chapters VI and VII we have formulated a scheme for a thorough reform of the village system and of local self-government. Some people seem to think that the introduction of these reforms will do away with the need for subdividing districts. We are, however, emphatically of the opinion that, far from doing away with this need, it will greatly intensify it. When a district officer has important work to do in every village of his district, it is more than ever necessary that the district should be of reasonable size.

Land Record Maintenance System.

39. The same argument applies to the introduction of a scheme for maintaining the record-of-rights. We have discussed this question in Chapter V, and, although we do not recommend the immediate introduction of any such scheme, we are opinion that, if at a future date such a scheme be introduced, the size of the districts will not improbably require further reduction.

District Advisory Councils.

40. Non-official Indian witnesses have repeatedly suggested to us that one of the best means of lightening heavy charges and of bringing the executive officers into closer touch with the people would be by the creation of "Advisory Councils for District Officers." Most of the witnesses readily admitted that such matters as the detection of crime, the prosecution of criminals, the trial of offences, the administration of the regular police and the village police, the hearing of appeals from subordinate Magistrates, and the inspection and supervision of subordinate courts must be dealt with by the District Magistrate alone; that such matters as the collection of land revenue, the registration of proprietors, the partition of estates, the exemption of estates from sale, the issue of certificates under the Public Demands Recovery Act, the administration of the Stamp Act, the management of wards' estates and the management and resettlement of Government estates must be dealt with by the Collector alone; and, finally, that all matters which are within the jurisdiction of local bodies, such as education, sanitation, pounds, ferries, dispensaries, conservancy, lighting, and means of communication, must be dealt with by the local bodies concerned without interference from the Advisory Councils. In the matter of excise administration it was admitted that Government had already taken special steps for the co-ordination and utilization of independent opinion. In short, the Committee found some difficulty in ascertaining what were the subjects which in the opinion of most of the witnesses could be usefully dealt with by the proposed Advisory Councils. The Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banarji, however, favoured us with a definite scheme, which consisted almost entirely of the following proposals :—

(*a*) The Advisory Council should be composed of nine members, two-thirds of whom would be elected and one-third appointed by Government.

(*b*) It should deal with such subjects, as—

(*i*) the partition of districts, the opening of new subdivisions, and alterations in thana boundaries ;

(*ii*) the establishment of new munsifis, thanas and honorary benches ;

(*iii*) legislative and administrative proposals, regarding which the opinion of the district officer is sought ; and

(*iv*) local administrative measures, such as the posting of additional police in distributed areas.

Now it is perfectly obvious that of these four items not one relates to matters of which the Collector is himself competent to dispose. He may initiate or recommend, and the Council may support or oppose his recommendation ; but the final orders are passed by the Government, and on the Government will lie the ultimate responsibility for accepting or rejecting the advice of the Council. What the Hon'ble Mr. Banarji proposes, therefore, so far as the above four items are concerned, is not a District Advisory Council for the Collector, but a Local Advisory Council for Government.

We will, however, attempt no further general criticism of the proposals, which were fully dealt with in the debates in the Imperial Council on the 9th March 1912 and the 19th March 1914. But we feel bound to point out that the scheme of an Advisory Council conflicts seriously with the Circle System proposed in Chapter VI of this Report. We propose, working from the bottom upwards, to recognize local self-government ; and to create, in the village, the circle, and the district, bodies which would be far more representative of the people than any Advisory Council can ever be. The executive officers of Government will be in close personal touch with all these bodies, and will thereby obtain much more valuable advice and assistance in administration than could ever be obtained from a mere Advisory Council which has no executive power. If this scheme is approved, it is obvious that the setting up in the district of a rival authority cannot but have an injurious effect on the popular interest taken in the working of the District Board and on its position in the district. Advisory Councils purport, like the District Board, to represent the people, but on a different basis, and for purposes which are certain to overlap the functions of the latter body. Finally, we feel it necessary to state that an Advisory Council can hardly be considered as a possible substitute for the partition of a district ; for it may reasonably be expected to add almost as much to the work of the Collector, as a Legislative Council does to that of a Provincial Government.

The creation of more subdivisions.

41. It is often suggested that the partition of districts can be avoided by creating more subdivisions. It seems to us, however, that the two problems are distinct. We have found many sadar subdivisions and many outlying subdivisions which are obviously too large, and we are not hesitating to recommend their partition. The fact, however, remains that the district is the real unit, and the district officer the real pivot of the administration. A district which consists of (say) five or six subdivisions, each moderate in size, and is at

the same time so large and populous that a single district officer cannot get into personal touch with the people in all parts of his district, is not a really suitable charge. It is of course an improvement on a state of affairs in which not only the district but also the subdivisions are unwieldy, but that is all that can be said for the arrangement. Intercourse between the people and the Subdivisional Officer is excellent so far as it goes, and should be encouraged and promoted to the utmost extent ; but it should never be treated as an adequate substitute for intercourse between the people and the Collector. It is impossible to view with satisfaction a state of affairs in which the people seldom or never come into contact with an officer higher than a member of the Provincial Service or a very junior member of the Indian Civil Service. This would be true, even if the general plan of administration were to remain as it is ; but when the village system which we are advocating is introduced throughout the mofussil, it will be altogether essential that the Collector should have time and opportunity to get into personal touch with every village Union in his district. Unless the Collector have such time and opportunity, the new village system will not only be born under unfavourable conditions, but will suffer from neglect throughout its life. We cannot, therefore, regard the creation of more subdivisions as a complete or satisfactory solution of the problem of unwieldy districts. In fact the greater the number of subdivisions, the greater is the volume of correspondence at headquarters, the greater is the work of office inspection, and the more difficult does it become for the district officer to visit the villages of his charge.

Devolution of Work : Criminal.

42. Another remedy which is sometimes suggested is the devolution of work from the district to the subdivisional officers, either with or without an increase in the number of subdivisions. So far as criminal work is concerned, we cannot see that much can be done in this direction. As regards the distribution of criminal cases and the transfer of such cases from one court to another within the subdivision, the Subdivisional Magistrate is already fully empowered under sections 191 and 528 of the Criminal Procedure Code. In the matter of revision, the respective powers of the Subdivisional Magistrate and District Magistrate are already defined in section 435 of the Criminal Procedure Code. As regards the hearing of appeals, it would be possible under section 407 (*2*) of the Criminal Procedure Code to invest all Subdivisional Officers with the powers of hearing appeals from second class or third class Magistrates within the subdivision, but on the whole, we would prefer to see the existing practice maintained in Bengal. It is very important that the District Magistrate should know as much as possible about the work of every junior Magistrate, and especially the Honorary Magistrates of the district ; and the hearing of appeals from these officers, whether they be stationed at headquarters or at subdivisions, is one of the best methods of seeing their work and correcting their errors. If, therefore, any distribution is to be made (apart from what we are recommending in the spheres of chaukidari administration and local self-government) it must be made in revenue work.

Devolution of Work: Revenue.

43. A feature which markedly distinguishes the revenue administration of Bengal from that of other provinces is the "Centralization of the Tauzi (Revenue Roll)"; that is to say, all payments of revenue and cesses, with the exception of payments in purely raiyatwari tracts, are made direct to the district officer at the headquarters, who alone takes coercive steps in cases of default. This means that about 85 per cent. of the land revenue demand is paid directly to the District Officer, while only 15 per cent. is paid through the staff which manages the raiyatwari tracts. The 85 per cent. which is mentioned above does not consist entirely of the permanently-settled demand; about 79 per cent. comes from permanently-settled estates, and about 6 per cent. from temporarily-settled estates. These figures are not without interest, particularly in view of the impression, which we found to be widely prevalent, to the effect that the whole of Bengal is permanently settled. As a matter of fact, only one-half of the land revenue of Bakarganj comes from the permanently-settled estates, while in Chittagong and Jalpaiguri much less than one-half comes from such estates. These districts are, however, exceptional, and the fact remains that, taking the land revenue as a whole, the settlement is permanent and the tauzi is centralised. We have considered whether it is possible or desirable to "break up the tauzi" in Bengal, by transferring to the Subdivisional Officers the duty of collecting the land revenue within their subdivisions, or even by transferring to the Circle Officers this duty in respect of the estates within their circles. The former proposal would follow the lines of the system which prevails in the Sylhet district of Assam; and the latter proposal would follow the lines of the system which prevails in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, and Madras. The question was considered by the Decentralization Commission (*vide* paragraph 584 of their Report), but they refrained from making any recommendation. They left the matter to the discretion of the Local Government. The question was subsequently considered by the Board of Revenue in Eastern Bengal and Assam. They came to the conclusion (*vide* Mr. Dixon's letter No. 1130, dated the 7th August 1911) that, so far as the Eastern Divisions of the present Province were concerned, it was inexpedient to break up the tauzi. We have come to the same conclusion as regards the whole Province.

Objections to Decentralisation of the Tauzi.

44. The breaking up of the tauzi would mean a violent departure from the settled practice of the Province. It would be justified only if it could be shown that the resulting benefits were beyond doubt. We found that the present system is working smoothly and satisfactorily and is popular with the revenue-payers. A scheme of devolution to subdivisions would involve heavy initial expenditure in the construction of tauzi offices at subdivisions and the total recurring charges would probably exceed the present recurring charges by something between 25 per cent. and 50 cent. If the devolution were made to the Circle Officer instead of the Subdivisional Officer, the proportionate increase in cost, both initial and recurring, would be still greater. Moreover, it is certain that any scheme of tauzi devolution would mean laxer supervision and greater opportunity for error and fraud. Only those who have had personal experience of the tauzi work of Bengal know how complex,

technical, and difficult it is. The head ministerial officer of the Collector's Tauzi Department, known as the tauzinavis, is a highly trained expert. He was once described as a "medicine-man who performs certain incantations, the result of which is Return No. X." It would be almost impossible to secure competent "medicine-men" in every subdivision of a district, and quite impossible to secure them in every circle. The local returns would inevitably come to the district headquarters full of mistakes and inaccuracies. Correspondence would ensue, the district return would be delayed, and the Commissioner and higher authorities would be kept in ignorance of the progress of revenue collection. Moreover, the work of the District Officer would probably be increased instead of reduced. It would be necessary for him to make a careful inspection of all the outlying tauzi offices at least once a year. He would be tied to several desks instead of to one, and would be further than ever from getting into touch with the people. Apart from this, the Subdivisional Officers of Bengal have already more than enough to do, and it would be a great mistake to burden them with tauzi work. Finally, to transfer to Subdivisional Officers the duty of working the "Sunset Law," and of deciding whether a zamindar should be sold up or allowed to pay after the prescribed day, would weaken *pro tanto* the already diminishing authority of the Collector, a result which we cannot view with equanimity. Against all these it may be said that what has proved a satisfactory solution in Sylhet, would prove a satisfactory solution in the adjoining districts of Mymensingh, Dacca, and Tippera. There are two answers to this argument. In the first place, we are not persuaded that the state of affairs in Sylhet is satisfactory; on the contrary, there are many indications that the authority of the Deputy Commissioner of that district has been unduly weakened. In the second place, the revenue conditions of Sylhet are quite distinct from those of the neighbouring districts in Bengal. Although the bulk of Sylhet is permanently settled, most of the revenue-payers are peasant proprietors, for whom it is obviously convenient to make their payments at local centres. In short, it is impossible to argue from Sylhet to Bengal; and we are in full agreement with the Board of Revenue in Eastern Bengal and Assam in thinking that in the Bengal districts the tauzi should remain centralised at the district headquarters. We are also in full agreement with the opinion of the Board to the effect that, if the revenue tauzi remains centralised, so also must the main branches of revenue work, namely, assessment and collection of cesses, partition of estates, registration of proprietary interests and protected tenures, opening and closing of separate accounts, and the whole work of the record room. Some items of miscellaneous revenue work, such as excise and income-tax, may well be handed over to Subdivisional or even to Circle Officers; indeed, some small measure of devolution has already been effected in the matter of petty wards' estates, but it is clear that decentralisation on so small a scale cannot in any way stave off the partition of unwieldy districts.

History of proposals for Partition of Mymensingh District.

45. Having shown, then, that partition is the only possible remedy in Bengal for cases where the volume of district work is unmanageable, we have now to see what views have been expressed by Government and the people regarding the proposals for partition, which have been

put forward in recent years. Although prior to the year 1882 hardly a decade passed without one or more partitions of districts or alterations of their boundaries, none of these measures evoked any particular expression of popular opinion. The proposals for the partition of the two districts of Mymensingh and Midnapur, however, have during the past decade called forth strong public protests; and it is in view of these and of the feeling against the Partition of Bengal of which the Midnapur and Mymensingh agitations may be looked on as reproductions in miniature, that it more particularly behoves us to frame no recommendations of this sort, except on the strongest reasons and in the face of the clearest necessity. Before putting forward our specific proposals, therefore, we shall examine in some detail the history of the schemes for the partition of these two districts.

There are few questions that have been for so long under the consideration of the Government of Bengal, as the partition of the Midnapur and Mymensingh districts. In 1876 Sir Richard Temple proposed the division of the Mymensingh district into two, giving as his reasons that the Government of India considered "it would be an administrative improvement and a public benefit to reduce the excessive proportions of this and other districts. The development of the system of subdivisions had been fully considered, but this measure, though advantageous, did not do all that was wanted." The population of Mymensingh at that time consisted of 2,349,917 persons. The Government of India declared that the extra cost would have to be borne by Provincial revenues, and not long after they requested that Provincial expenditure might be curtailed as much as possible. The proposed partition was, therefore, dropped for the time, though a new subdivision was opened at Netrakona in 1882. The question of splitting up the district was again put forward in 1884. It was then stated that "with reference to its large size and population such a course would be attended probably with some increased administrative efficiency: but the Board did not consider it essential, in view of the fact that "in ordinary times it is quite the easiest-going and quietest of the Eastern Bengal districts; it is true that of late there have been troubles, but these have been caused, not by the size of the district, but by the uncertainty prevailing as regards the Rent Bill, and by the conduct of self-interested and designing persons."

In 1899 the proposal was again revived by Mr. Savage, when reporting on the outrages on women, for which the district at one time achieved a certain notoriety. He thought that the work was too heavy for a single District Magistrate and District Superintendent of Police. It was "manifestly impossible", the District Magistrate reported, "for any District Superintendent of Police or any Magistrate to keep his eye on 6 Inspectors and 75 Sub-Inspectors at once." The proposal was, however, rejected by Government on grounds of expense.

It was again taken up under Sir Andrew Fraser's orders in 1904. The Partition of Bengal supervened in 1905; but discussions were still going on, and under the orders of the Government of India, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam published in 1908 a Resolution

inviting the opinion of the public on a proposal for dividing the district into two portions, with the two headquarters side by side in Mymensingh town. This proposal met with considerable opposition; and a revised scheme was put forward for the creation of a new district, comprising only the subdivisions of Tangail and Jamalpur, which "left it open to a future generation to create a third district, by again subdividing the remainder of the Mymensingh district." A fresh Resolution explaining the new proposal was issued for the information of the public in July 1912, and is presumably still under their consideration.

The official view of the necessity for the partition of the district seems to have passed through the following stages. At first it was admitted that the size of the district militated against its efficient management, but considerations of expense precluded action. The next phase of opinion was an acquiescence in this low standard of administration, provided that no startling breach of public tranquillity or outbreak of heinous crime occurred as a consequence thereof. In the meantime the population, the wealth, the education, the judicial and other administrative business of the district went on increasing with striking rapidity. Finally, when financial conditions improved and Government simultaneously awoke to the intolerable nature of the conditions under which they were attempting to administer the district, their attempts at improvement were constantly opposed, and have been hitherto rendered nugatory by the opposition of a certain section of the educated public.

Nature of the opposition to Partition of Mymensingh District.

46. The people have been formally consulted on each of the two somewhat different proposals that have been hitherto put forward. The nature of the opposition then met with and now to be expected may be divined from the character of the objections made on these occasions. At the last public conference held in July 1912, everyone concerned, except Babu Anath Bandhu Guha, representative of the town pleader party, admitted that some strengthening of the administration was necessary. One or two zamindars put forward some not very forcibly expressed opinions against the partition, but were at the same time quite ready with their suggestions for the best way of making it, if Government decided to carry out its proposal. Precisely the same line was taken by Babu Anath Bandhu Guha himself in 1909, when consulted by letter. At the conference of 1912, however, he expressed himself decidedly against the partition, but did not put forward a single objection which really related to any other part of the district than Mymensingh town. The Muhammadans, though somewhat nervous as to the effect of the partition on their numerical position, were decidedly in favour of the measure; and there were also whole-hearted supporters of the proposal among the Hindu zamindars.

At present, so far as the present attitude of the people could be ascertained by the Committee at their visit to Mymensingh, there would be very little opposition to the formation of two districts with the headquarters of both at Mymensingh. One gentleman, indeed, expressed the opinion that the original opposition to this was a mistake.

A tripartite division would, however, be opposed, though it found supporters among several non-official witnesses.

The protests appeared to come almost entirely from the pleader class. These are supported by the numerous class of touts, hotel-keepers, and other persons nourished by litigation. A small number of zamindars, whose houses were in Mymensingh and lands in some outlying part of the district, were also very naturally impressed by the inconvenience that would be caused to themselves.

These persons also put forward the argument—which appealed to a wider section—that the importance of the district and of its local bodies, official and non-official, would be diminished, while such headquarters institutions as schools, colleges, water-works, dispensaries and the like would suffer, because they would no longer possess so wide an area from which to draw subscriptions. On the other hand, the residents of outlying towns which had any hopes of becoming the headquarters of a new district were at least as full of anxiety that the partition should be put through, as the town party were that it should be avoided.

History of proposals for Partition of Midnapur District.

47. The partition of the Midnapur district was included in the proposals put forward by Sir Richard Temple in 1876; and their abandonment, as already explained involved, the indefinite postponement of the scheme in respect of this district also. Owing to the quieter and less advanced character of its people, no general disturbance of the public peace occurred to test the administration of the district till recently; but the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir Rivers Thomson) remarked in 1883, referring to a bad case of khas mahal mismanagement, that "the charge of Midnapur district is probably too heavy to be entrusted to a single officer, however able and zealous he may be." The proposals for the reduction of the charge were, however, again abandoned on financial considerations in 1885. The matter does not seem to have been taken up again till 1904, when a Committee was appointed to consider the division of the district, and reported in favour of the Contai-Midnapur scheme, which involved the creation of a new district, more or less corresponding to the old Hijli district. They stated that "no really serious opposition was anticipated" to the partition of Midnapur, into two districts.

Objections first put forward.

48. On the proposals being made known to the public, a number of petitions were received, representing the views of various classes of persons:—

(*a*) A petition from certain representatives of the Tamluk subdivision, pointing out the injury that would be done to its inhabitants by Contai being created their district headquarters instead of Midnapur, and urging the claims of their own town.

(*b*) A petition from the proprietors of the Narayangarh estate, asking that two thanas, in which a part of their estates was situated, should not be annexed to Contai.

(*c*) A letter from Mr. K. B. Dutt, Barrister-at-law, Chairman of the Midnapur Municipality, stating that in his opinion the

district was adequately administered at present, and objecting to the partition on the ground of expense.

(*d*) A letter from Raja Sati Prasad Garga Bahadur, of Mahisadal, pointing out the special inconvenience entailed on the inhabitants of Tamluk, in addition to the objections raised by Mr. K. B. Dutt.

(*e*) A letter from Raja Narendra Lal Khan, of Narajol, and the Zamindars' Samiti, in which they referred to the difficulty that would be experienced by the inhabitants of several specified places, including Tamluk, from the change. They gave it as their opinion that the district had been satisfactorily administered hitherto, while the partition would cause general disturbance, would reduce the importance of the district, and was not wanted by the people.

Revised proposals and the objections to them.

49. The gravity of the administrative inconvenience entailed by the proposal to include Tamluk in the proposed district of which the headquarters were to be at Contai, impressed itself on the Government of Bengal, and their next proposal entailed the location of the headquarters of the new district at Kharagpur, which would be no less convenient for the proposed southern district than Midnapur itself. Further opinions were invited on this proposal, and some of these were not unfavourable. But objections were raised on the following points :—

(1) The new headquarters would be no nearer to the people of the proposed southern district than Midnapur.

(2) The northern Midnapur district, with its poorer and less developed territory, would be comparatively unimportant, and the District Board and other public institutions would lose in efficiency.

(3) Residents of the southern district, whether zamindars with houses in Midnapur or parents educating their children there, would have to keep up two establishments.

(4) Inconvenience would arise to litigants from the southern district, if the criminal courts were at Kharagpur and the civil courts at Midnapur.

Action by the Government of India.

50. The Government of India were influenced by the popular objections to the partition, though they must clearly have seen that these proceeded mainly from the inhabitants of Midnapur town; for the suggestion that they made in reply to the Bengal Government's proposals was the retention of Midnapur as the headquarters of both districts. This proposal the Bengal Government were unable to accept for somewhat obvious reasons; and the Government of India declined "mainly on political grounds," to proceed any further with the question of partition. An Additional District Magistrate was appointed in 1908. In 1911 the Government of India re-opened the question by inquiring whether the working of the present arrangements was satisfactory. The

Government of Bengal replied that this was far from being the case; that the administration of the district, the alleged excellence of which was put forward by the objectors as their strongest argument, had been quite unable to resist the trial to which it had recently been submitted; and that the partition was more than ever an urgent necessity. But it was added that, to prevent misconception of the motives of Government, the Lieutenant-Governor would prefer to wait for a year or two before actually carrying out the partition.

Latest proposals and objections.

51. The case was taken up again in 1913, after the decision of the appeal in the well-known Midnapur law-suit, and a fresh Resolution was issued inviting objections, of which a plentiful crop was forthcoming. They contained only two new arguments of importance; the one was an elaborate and quite ineffective attempt to controvert the statements of local officers, that the district work was too heavy for one man and that the Additional District Magistrate was not a satisfactory solution of the difficulty; the other was that the money to be spent on the partition might be much better used for village betterment, sanitation, agricultural improvement, and the like.

Analysis of the various objections

52. We are constrained to remark that this latter objection strikes us as a singularly ineffective argument in the mouths of a class who are continually calling for increased expenditure on education, sanitation, and other most desirable objects; for it is obvious to any one with the smallest administrative experience, that such expenditure is bound to be largely misapplied and wasted, without the close and careful supervision of the Magistrate, the Civil Surgeon, and the other members of the district staff. It is also obvious that non-officials are not in a position to judge of the real pressure of district work, as indeed is evident from the weakness of their attempts to do so. Though neither here nor in Mymensingh was any direct mention made by objectors of the loss of income that would fall on the pleader class in consequence of the reduced size of the district, the fact was generally admitted in evidence before us in several districts, and, no doubt, accounts for much of the opposition from the legal profession. We do not wish to imply that this motive is not a reasonable one; but in many other cases we have heard of public-spirited members of the Bar who have urged on Government measures which they considered for the good of the province or the district, even though likely to result in loss to themselves. Finally, we have regretfully come to the conclusion, from the nature of some of the arguments used in both these districts and of the objections put before us in evidence, that any measure which tends to the more effective supervision by the official staff of the working of a district is repugnant to a certain section of inveterate malcontents.

We may add that, in this district, Contai is just as insistent on its claims to be made into a district headquarters as Tangail in Mymensingh. In fact, whatever arguments may be actually expressed, the motives which impel Mymensingh and Midnapur to oppose the partition are much the same as those which have led Tangail and Contai to support it.

It is waste of time, however, to prove that arguments are insincere, or that motives are interested. What we have to consider is, what proportion of people are affected by the various considerations put forward and to what exent. Looked at from this point of view, the case of the objectors leads us to precisely the same conclusions here as in Mymensingh. The objections either represent the interests of a small section, which are in some cases diametrically opposed to those of the general public; or they are purely sentimental, a line of argument which was well illustrated by the naïve statement of a leading Calcutta witness, who said that he did not think any district should be partitioned, however large it might be. In any case, they are put forward almost entirely by townspeople, and they relate almost entirely to the effect which the partition is expected to have on the headquarters town and its various interests.

Partition the only real solution.

53. We have, therefore, come to the deliberate conclusion that there is no objection of real importance to the partition of unwieldy districts and subdivisions and that this is the only real solution of the difficulty. The district and the subdivisional boundaries are not sacrosanct, and the sooner this is realized the better. These boundaries have been repeatedly altered in the past. In all branches of the administration, work is daily becoming more heavy and more complex with the increase in population and education; and there is no reason why Government should hesitate to do now what it has so often done before—to modify the administrative charges of its officers in such a way that the work will be efficiently performed and the real wants of the people will be met. It is true that each proposal for partition will awaken an outcry; but it cannot be too clearly understood that this outcry comes from a numerically negligible section of the people. In fact, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the outcry is confined to the members of the Bar Library, to the owners of house property in congested stations, to a few zamindars who will be inconvenienced by having to duplicate their offices, and to a few sentimental persons who imagine that the importance and the happiness of themselves and their neighbours are founded on the fact that they reside within a district which has an area and population in excess of other districts. There are some others who deny the necessity of reducing the heavy charges, as they have no means of gauging the volume or appreciating the difficulties of the district officer's work. But the mass of the population entertain no objection whatever to proposals for the partition of districts and subdivisions. In fact, they welcome changes which are so obviously undertaken for their own protection and their own convenience.

Specific proposals.

54. As regards our specific proposals for the partition of districts, we have carefully considered the cases of the Midnapur, Rangpur and Tippera districts, the 24-Parganas, and the four districts of the Dacca Division. All these have a population of over two millions. The following statement will give some idea of the relative volume of work in each of them :—

Name of District.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Municipalities.	Village Unions.	Chaukidars and Dafadars.	Number of Estates on the Tauzi.	Income of District Boards.	Government Estates.		Total Land Revenue.	Collector's correspondence.		Offences reported to Courts.	Cases tried by Magistrates.		Cases committed to Sessions.	Number of Witnesses examined by Magistrates.	Number of Processes of all kinds.	Number of Civil Suits tried in Civil Courts in 1912.
										Area in square miles.	Revenue.		Receipts.	Issues.		Original.	Appeals and Revisions.				
									Rs.		Rs.	Rs.									
Mymensingh	4,526,422	6,249	5	34	8	772	7,716	9,955	6,00,906	67·1	1,09,987	8,79,093	33,899	38,456	20,239	11,894	365	156	35,983	83,618	54,616
Dacca ...	2,960,402	2,777	4	22	2	369	4,256	11,029	2,79,812	34·5	38,532	5,16,327	17,863	21,858	12,951	6,563	269	157	19,840	66,986	49,238
Midnapur ...	2,821,201	5,145	4	37	7	640	6,046	5,944	4,52,466	439·3	6,27,660	24,83,569	33,274	28,155	10,269	4,765	206	46	11,949	97,650	35,024
24-Parganas*	2,434,104	4,844	5	39	23	288	3,337	2,037	3,38,107	163	3,96,832	17,98,256	39,591	37,451	39,953†	34,281†	268	78	47,444	51,452	43,090
Tippera ...	2,430,138	2,499	3	17	2	290	3,259	2,578	2,56,550	57	68,592	11,01,470	...‡	...‡	15,645	5,865	521	122	23,843	21,308	43,772
Bakarganj ...	2,422,891	4,642	4	30	5	488	5,992	3,650	4,67,804	485	7,56,403	19,31,689	104,848	22,902	8,814	5,329	187	119	21,298	36,237	45,481
Rangpur ...	2,395,330	3,479	4	24	1	476	5,197	681	3,09,722	2	990	10,14,221	9,426	12,242	8,214	2,696	109	36	10,339	25,572	31,121
Faridpur ...	2 121,914	2,576	4	20	2	382	4,287	6,107	1,93,206	126·8	1,64,671	6,19,725	12,974	17,112	8,533	4,845	403	71	21,218	18,230	35,631

* Exclusive of the 12 Calcutta Police Thanas.

† Including cases from the 12 Calcutta Police Thanas.

‡ Not available.

We are prepared to say at once that there is no case for the partition of the Rangpur district. Though it has a population of over 2,385,000, it is remarkably compact, is well served by railways and roads, and has only 681 estates upon the revenue-roll. The necessity for the partition of the Faridpur and Tippera districts and of the 24-Parganas has been laid before us, but we are not in a position to make any immediate recommendation. A preliminary investigation inclines us to believe that their partition is required; but we recognize that the pressure of work in the two former districts is not on a par with that in Dacca and Bakarganj; and in view of the great expense involved by the partition of the four districts in which we are recommending it, we think it inadvisable to propose any further partitions that are not of absolute urgency. We feel sure, however, that action cannot long be delayed in these three districts, and we desire to point out that the question will have to be taken up and dealt with, as soon as circumstances permit.

With regard to the remaining four districts, the following are our proposals:—Mymensingh should be divided at once into three districts and the subdivisions increased from five to nine; Midnapur should at once be divided into two districts and the subdivisions increased from four to six; Dacca should at once be divided into two districts and the subdivisions increased from four to six; Bakarganj should at once be divided into two districts and its subdivisions increased from four to six; and a new subdivision should at once be opened in Tippera, in Faridpur, and in Pabna. In the following Chapter we explain in detail the nature of our various proposals, and we annex maps to illustrate them. We may add that we are firmly of opinion that the creation of new districts and subdivisions should precede or accompany, rather than follow, the introduction of the reforms in the village system. This is altogether essential to the success of these reforms. Moreover, to delay the introduction not only of the proposed partitions, but also of the important scheme for village self-government described in Chapters VI and VII, until permanent masonry buildings have been constructed for the new headquarters of all the districts and subdivisions would, we submit, be a most unfortunate decision. It follows, therefore, that the new districts and subdivisions should, in our opinion, be opened with temporary buildings. This will not only ensure the prompt introduction of the reforms, but will enable Government to select better sites, if the original sites be found not altogether suitable.

CHAPTER IV.

Detailed Proposals for the Reduction of over-heavy Districts and Subdivisions.

MYMENSINGH DISTRICT.

General remarks on the Mymensingh District.

55. The case for the partition of this district will be found in letter No. 11486 C., dated the 9th October 1907, from the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam to the Government of India, and in Bengal Government letter No. 4456 P., dated the 8th July 1912, enclosing copy of Resolution No. 4346 P., of the same date, for the approval of the Government of India. The general nature of the districts of Eastern Bengal, the extraordinary difficulty of their communications, the density of their population, the high level of education and prosperity reached by a section of the population, and their unusual political conditions have been described in the preceding chapter; while detailed statements for the Mymensingh district will be found appended to the first of the two letters above quoted. We need only supplement these by a few remarks on the special peculiarities of this district. It contains five subdivisions, of which the areas vary from 1,822 square miles to 985 square miles, and the population from 1,185,330 to 655,295 persons. The population of any one of these exceeds the average population of a district in most Provinces of India. Large areas in the south-east of the district are covered with swamps, which the rains convert into wide stretches of water. They are intersected by numerous channels, communications are decidedly deficient, roads are few and bad, and only one of the subdivisional headquarters is connected with Mymensingh by railway.

The correspondence of the District Officer amounted in 1912 to the enormous total of 21,353 letters received and 26,242 letters issued. The number of criminal offences reported in the same years exceeded 20,000, of which nearly 12,000, involving the examination of over 35,000 witnesses, were actually tried. The district contains one Arts College, 27 High Schools and 133 Middle English Schools, besides 2,352 Primary Schools. The introduction of the Circle System (proposed in Chapters VI and VII) would require the creation of no less than 30 Circles.

Various attempts have been made to assist the heads of the different branches of district administration. An Additional Magistrate, an Additional Sessions Judge, and an Additional Superintendent of Police have been posted to the district. None of the local witnesses examined by the Committee denied the necessity of a partition, and the evidence of those best entitled to be heard was in favour of a tripartite division.

The partition of the district into two, we feel, would be a very incomplete solution of the difficulty, even for the present; and, though the increase in the wealth and population may be less rapid than in the past, cannot fail to result in a very few years in a reappearance of the present intolerable conditions. Another partition would mean additional expense and unnecessary disturbance; and we feel that it would be a mistake of principle to propose the creation of any fresh district with a prosperous population exceeding two millions among whom the educated classes are strongly represented.

Topographical difficulties in the way of Partition.

56. There are certain difficulties in the way of any proposal for partition. The headquarters town is almost exactly in the centre of the district, and the lines of railway, existing and proposed, converge on it. The Sadar Subdivision surrounds the town of Mymensingh, and the other four subdivisions lie symmetrically to the north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west of it. The Madhupur forest runs from the south nearly to the north of the district, which it divides into two very unequal halves, and can hardly be ignored in any proposed partition. The Brahmaputra, again, affords a second but more even line of division.

The existing line of railway runs from Dacca through Mymensingh to Jagannathganj, with a branch from Singhjani to Bahadurabad having a total length of 115 miles. There are proposals for the construction of the following additional lines:—

(*a*) A line from Tangail to Mymensingh, with a branch to Singhjani.

(*b*) A line from Subarnakhali on the bank of the Jamuna, opposite Serajganj, to Mymensingh.

(*c*) A line from Bhairab Bazar, through Kishorganj, to Mymensingh and Netrakona, and thence to the Darrangiri coal fields.

An important factor to be reckoned with is the mutual jealousy of the towns of Tangail and Jamalpur on the one side, and of Netrakona and Kishorganj on the other, regarding their respective claims to be the headquarters station of the two new districts.

We were so much impressed by the immense size and the volume of work of the Mymensingh district, by the necessity for the radical improvement of its administrative condition, and by the numerous difficulties in the way of a dual or even a treble partition, that we at first contemplated the possibility of having to divide the district into five; but when the great expense of the general programme which we have to recommend became apparent, we thought it best to confine our proposals within more modest dimensions. We propose therefore to divide this district into three: a south-eastern or Kishorganj district; a western or Gopalpur district; and a central and north-eastern district, with its headquarters at Mymensingh. This is,

practically speaking, the suggestion of Mr. Spry, the District Magistrate, and we are of opinion that it is the best possible scheme.

The Kishorganj District.

57. The new district of Kishorganj will consist of police-stations Kishorganj, Kathiadi, Bajitpur, Bhairab, Astagram and Badla, which constitute the present subdivision of Kishorganj; Khaliajuri and Kendua from the present Netrakona Subdivision; and Iswarganj and Nandail from the present Sadar Subdivision. It will be a compact district, bounded by the Brahmaputra and the Meghna rivers on the east, south and west, with an area of 1,630 square miles and a population of 1,366,407. The headquarters will be at Kishorganj. This district will require three subdivisions, with headquarters at Kishorganj, at Iswarganj, and at Bajitpur or Bhairab or Nikli. The Kishorganj or Sadar Subdivision will consist of the Kishorganj and Kathiadi police-stations, with an area of 397 square miles and a population of 369,034. The Bajitpur, Bhairab or Nikli Subdivision will comprise the police-stations Bhairab, Bajitpur, Astagram, Badla and Khaliajuri, with an area of 649 square miles and a population of 493,448. The headquarters of the subdivision, if placed at Bhairab, will not be in the centre but at the extreme south; however the natural lines of communication follow the three rivers which traverse the subdivision from north to south and converge on Bhairab. We are inclined to recommend Bhairab, as it is a steamer station and will soon be a railway terminus also; it is the most important trade centre in the subdivision, and is considered healthy. Bajitpur is a municipality, and connected by road to Kathiadi and Kishorganj; but there is little room for expansion of the town, and it is surrounded by swamps. Nikli is the headquarters of a large Government estate, and more central than either of the other two; but it has no road or railway connection with the rest of the district. This subdivision includes the whole of the difficult "sea" area. To split it up among several subdivisions would mean for each officer an area through which he would have to tour by the slow and expensive green-boat; whereas by uniting the whole of it into a single subdivision, it will be possible to give the Subdivisional Officer a launch, and thereby put him in a position to visit almost any part of his charge with a minimum of discomfort and delay. The Iswarganj Subdivision will consist of the police-stations Iswarganj, Nandail and Kendua, and will have an area of 584 square miles and a population of 503,925.

The Civil Executive staff required for the administration of this district will be—

1 District Officer.

2 Subdivisional Officers, 1 at each subdivision.

2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the headquarters.

1 Deputy Magistrate with second or third class powers at the headquarters.

3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second class powers, one at each subdivision.

The details of the three subdivisions are given below :—

KISHORGANJ DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to the Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Kishorganj ...	190,604	224	525	29	1
	Kathiadi ...	178,430	173	218	28	...
	Total ...	369,034	397	743	57	1
Bhairab ...	Bhairab ...	53,513	70	160	8	...
	Bajitpur ...	153,645	220	169	22	1
	Astagram ...	97,897	130	100	15	...
	Badla ...	146,630	168	295	21	...
	Khaliajuri ...	39,763	61	16	8	...
	Total ...	493,448	649	760	74	1
Iswarganj ...	Iswarganj ...	195,786	204	288	31	...
	Kendua ...	175,868	267	206	32	...
	Nandali ...	132,271	113	224	24	...
	Total ...	503,925	584	718	87	...
District Total ...	10 ...	1,366,407	1,630	2,221	218	2

The new Mymensingh District.

58. The new Mymensingh district will consist of the present Sadar Subdivision, excluding Iswarganj and Nandail police-stations ; the present Netrakona Subdivision, excluding Kendua and Khaliajuri ; and the police-station of Nalitabari, taken from the present Jamalpur Subdivision. The headquarters will remain at Mymensingh. The district will still be large, with an area of 2,610 square miles and a population of 1,421,490. It will include three subdivisions : North Mymensingh or Phulpur, South Mymensingh or Sadar, and Netrakona. The headquarters of the first two may, for the present, both remain in Mymensingh ; while Netrakona will still be the headquarters of the new subdivision of that name. The North Mymensingh Subdivision will consist of Phulpur, Haluaghat and Nalitabari police-stations, and that part of the Kotwali police-station, which lies on the left bank of the Brahmaputra and should be made a separate police-station. It will have an area of 723 square miles and a population of 389,682. The South Mymensingh or Sadar Subdivision will consist of the remaining part of the Kotwali police-station lying on the right bank of the Brahmaputra, and Trisal, Muktagacha, Phulbaria, Gafargaon and Bhaluka police-stations, with an area of 1,067 square miles and a population of 592,144. This subdivision will include the forest area known as the "Madhupur Jungle." The Netrakona Subdivision will now contain the police-stations of Netrakona, Durgapur, Kalamakanda and Barhatta, with an area of 820 square miles and a population of 439,664. The Civil Executive staff required for this district will be as follows :—

1 District Officer.

3 Subdivisional Officers, one at each subdivision.

3 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate and 1 Sub-Deputy Magistrate } with second or third class powers at the Sadar.
1 Sub-Deputy Magistrate with second class powers at Netrakona.

Detailed information for this district is given in tabular form below :—

MYMENSINGH DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Police cases reported in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
North Mymensingh or Phulpur.	Phulpur ...	215,129	231	265	26	...
	Haluaghat ...		167	123	16	...
	Nalitabari ...	124,553	285	88	26	...
	North Kotwali (approximate).	50,000	40	120	4	...
	Total ...	389,682	723	596	72	...
South Mymensingh or Sadar.	South Kotwali (approximate).	175,337	102	299	18	1
	Trisal ...		194	134	15	...
	Muktagacha ...	96,407	141	160	17	1
	Phulbaria ...	130,631	187	163	30	...
	Gafargaon ...	189,769	160	171	25	...
	Bhaluka ...		283	77	12	...
	Total ...	592,144	1,067	1,004	117	2
Netrakona ...	Netrakona ...	189,857	259	364	34	1
	Durgapur and Kalamakanda.	127,035	382	115	30	...
	Barhatta ...	122,772	179	194	22	...
	Total ...	439,664	820	673	86	1
District Total ...	14	1,421,490	2,610	2,273	275	3

The Gopalpur District.

59. The remaining portion of the present district, consisting of its entire western side, should form the third district. It will comprise the whole of the present Tangail Subdivision and the present Jamalpur Subdivision, excluding the Nalitabari police-station. The towns of Tangail and Jamalpur are both anxious to be selected for the headquarters of the new districts, and the rivalry between them is very keen. The Tangail Subdivision is no doubt the heavier and more important of the two, but the town itself is very unhealthy. Owing to the great pressure of work at Tangail, we have decided to recommend that it should be divided into two subdivisions. If either Tangail or Jamalpur be chosen as headquarters, it will be at one end of the district, and a new subdivisional headquarters will be required in addition to the district headquarters. In consideration of these reasons we think that there is much to be said for the suggestion that the headquarters of this district should be situated in the centre of the district, within the jurisdiction of the Gopalpur police-station, at a healthy place near the junction of the proposed

railways from Jamalpur to Tangail and from Subarnakhali to Mymensingh. The exact situation can be determined when the final alignment of these railway lines is settled; a question, which, we understand, will be decided immediately. If, however, it be considered that either Jamalpur or Tangail should be the headquarters, we have no hesitation in preferring the former. Meanwhile we assume the location of the headquarters at Gopalpur, and shall refer to the new districts by this name. This district also should have three subdivisions. The northern part, comprising Jamalpur, Melandaha, Sherpur, Dewanganj and Madarganj police-stations, should form the Jamalpur subdivision, with headquarters at Jamalpur. It will have an area of 948 square miles and a population of 688,753. The central portion, consisting of Sarisabari, Gopalpur, Ghatail and Kalihati police-stations, will be included in the Sadar Subdivision, with an area of 615 square miles and a population of 554,315. The southern portion, containing the densely populated thanas of Tangail, Basail, Mirzapur and Nagarpur, will constitute the new Tangail Subdivision, with an area of 446 square miles and a population of 495,457.

The Civil Executive staff required for the district will consist of—

1 District Magistrate.
3 Subdivisional Officers, one at each subdivision.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate and 1 Sub-Deputy Magistrate } with second or third class powers at the Sadar.
2 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second class powers for Tangail and Jamalpur.

The detailed information for this district is shown in the table below :—

GOPALPUR DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in in square miles.	Police cases reported in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Sarisabari ...	79,905	113	154	13	...
	Gopalpur ...	218,232	273	250	33	...
	Kalihati ...	160,982	144	161	26	...
	Ghatail ...	95,196	85	96	17	...
	Total ...	554,315	615	661	89	...
Jamalpur ...	Jamalpur and Melandaha.	255,859	315	223	31	1
	Sherpur ...	179,658	268	168	28	1
	Dewanganj ...	177,553	262	176	28	...
	Madarganj ...	75,683	103	85	9	...
	Total ...	688,753	948	652	96	2
Tangail ...	Tangail ...	268,305	137	317	30	1
	Basail ...		94	98	16	...
	Mirzapur ...	108,781	100	124	19	...
	Nagarpur ...	118,371	115	132	22	...
	Total ...	495,457	446	671	87	1
District Total ...	13	1,738,525	2,009	1,984	272	3

60. The scheme recommended by us will necessitate the construction of a new district headquarters at Gopalpur and the conversion of the present subdivisional headquarters at Kishorganj into district headquarters, the construction of new subdivisional headquarters at Iswarganj and Bajitpur and of a police-station in the Kotwali thana on the left bank of the river. **General effect of the Proposals.**

The net increase in the Civil Executive staff will be one District Magistrate and four Sub-Deputy Magistrates as shown below:—

Officers.	Present staff.	Proposed staff.	Increase.	Decrease.	Net Increase.
District Magistrates ...	2	3	1	...	1
Joint Magistrates	1	...	...	1	Nil
Subdivisional Officers, Indian Civil Service.	4	5	1	...	
Subdivisional Officers, Provincial Civil Service.	...	4	4	...	Nil
Deputy Magistrates ...	14	10	...	4	
Sub-Deputy Magistrates ...	4	8	4	...	4

At present there is a Joint Magistrate stationed at the headquarters of the Sadar and at each of the four outlying subdivisions. We propose that the five Joint Magistrates should hold charge of the five outlying subdivisions in the three new districts, namely, Bhairab, Iswarganj, Netrakona, Jamalpur, and Tangail. They will each be assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate with second class powers. The four Sadar Subdivisions will be held by Deputy Magistrates. We have also proposed three Deputy Magistrates with first class powers for the new Mymensingh and two for each of the other districts, besides a Deputy Magistrate with second or third class powers for each of the three. Thus there will be required 11 full-powered Deputy Magistrates and three with second or third class powers. Against this we have at present a sanctioned staff of five full-powered Deputy Magistrates for the Sadar, two for Tangail and one for each of the other three subdivisions, and the Excise Superintendent and three Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers at Sadar. There will thus be no increase in the staff of Deputy Magistrates.

Midnapur District.

61. The case for the partition of this district was presented by the Government of Bengal in their letters No. 1361 T.—P., dated the 30th June 1906, and No. 3501 P.—D., dated the 2nd November 1911, to the Government of India, and in their Resolution No. 6072 P., dated the 7th June 1913, of which a copy was forwarded to the Government of India with their letter No. 2126 P., dated the 23rd June 1913. We would especially invite a reference to the above Resolution, which contains a full statement of the case for the partition, and to the history of the partition proposals given in the preceding chapter. It will be enough to repeat here that the district is exceedingly large, with an area of 5,145 square miles; and, though its population of 2,821,201 is not equal in density to that of some East Bengal districts, there are **General Remarks on the Midnapur District.**

The following table will show the area, population, and other particulars of the existing and the proposed subdivisions :—

Name of Subdivision.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Cases brought to trial in 1912.	Village Unions.	Number of Chaukidars.	Khas Mahal demand.
Present Subdivisions.						Rs.
Sadar	894	599,266	957	100	1,103	26,631
Serajganj	957	829,320	1,850	100	1,109	32,773
Total ...	1,851	1,428,586	2,807	200	2,212	59,404
Proposed Subdivisions.						
Sadar	577	414,392	790	65	735	21,655
Bera	547	425,228	688	61	664	26,756
Serajganj	727	588,966	1,329	74	813	10,993
Total ...	1,851	1,428,586	2,807	200	2,212	59,404

We proposed no reduction of the staff at the sadar in consequence of the creation of the new subdivision. At Serajganj, the staff might be reduced by transferring to Bera the Deputy Magistrate at present stationed at Shahzadpur. At the new subdivision there will be required, besides the Deputy Magistrate transferred from Shahzadpur, a Civilian Subdivisional Officer and a Sub-Deputy Collector. Our recommendation will thus involve the construction of a subdivisional headquarters at Bera, and the addition of one Civilian Subdivisional Officer and one Sub-Deputy Magistrate.

New Subdivision in Faridpur District.

81. The question of dividing the Madaripur Subdivision was considered at the Conference of Commissioners held in October 1912. They recommended the creation of a new subdivision in the eastern part, but thought that in consideration of the fact that the subdivision was recently relieved by the formation of the Gopalganj Subdivision, this measure should be taken up after the more urgent partitions had been carried out. Two of our members visited Madaripur, and we consulted the Collector and the Commissioner at a conference held in Dacca. The work in this subdivision is too heavy for one officer, and a full-powered Deputy Magistrate has been appointed to assist him. The number of complaints in criminal cases was 3,152, while 1,469 cases were reported to the Police in 1913. Of these 4,621 cases which the Subdivisional Officer had to deal with, 1,815 cases were actually brought to trial. The subdivision contains extensive khas mahals which, however, are not now under the supervision or management of the Subdivisional Officer. This subdivision has been one of the most prolific breeding grounds of sedition and the scene of several anarchist outrages and political dacoities. In the matter of education it is the most advanced part of the Faridpur District.

We consider that this subdivision is too heavy for a single officer to manage, and propose that it should be divided into two.

The statistical information regarding this district is given in the table below :—

MIDNAPUR DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar	Midnapur	78,171	136	232	10	1
	Salbani	59,578	215	46	15	...
	Garbehta	126,353	409	46	30	...
	Keshpur	83,357	187	78	18	...
	Debra	66,799	132	92	13	...
	Panskura	143,991	152	48	37	...
	Total	558,249	1,231	542	123	1
Ghatal	Ghatal	83,341	91	82	15	1
	Daspur	123,157	130	48	27	...
	Chandrakona	94,898	96	45	14	3
	Ramjibanpur		55	21	4	1
	Total	301,396	372	196	60	5
Jhargram	Binpur	163,172	379	64	Regulation Chaukidara.	...
	Jhargram		294	54		...
	Gopiballabhpur		364	98		...
	Nayagram		166	23	21	...
	Total	355,793	1,203	239	21	...
District Total ...	14	1,215,438	2,806	977	204	6

63. The second district will consist of a compact block of territory forming the south-eastern part of the present district, which, together with its headquarters, which will adjoin Kharagpur, may bear the name of Hijli, and recall the memory of the old district with its once famous port and trading centre. It will comprise the present Contai Subdivision; the present Tamluk Subdivision, excluding Panskura; and the police-stations of Kharagpur, Narayangarh, Keshiari, Sabong, Pingla, Dantan and Mohanpur out of the present Sadar Subdivision. The total area will be 2,339 square miles, and the populations 1,605,763. The headquarters should be built on the site already selected and acquired by Government near Kharagpur. **The Hijli District.**

The Civil Executive staff required for this district will be as follows :—

1 District Officer.
1 Civilian Subdivisional Officer at Contai.
2 Deputy Magistrates, Subdivisional Officers, at the Sadar and Tamluk.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers and
1 Deputy Magistrate with second or third class powers } at the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate with first class powers at Contai.
3 Sub-deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers, one at the headquarters of each subdivision.

The following table contains the statistical details :—

HIJLI DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Kharagpur ...	132,875	258	292	24	...
	Narayangarh ...	123,328	226	84	19	...
	Keshiari ...		60	23	6	...
	Sabong ...	147,590	123	30	18	...
	Pingla ...		95	31	13	...
	Dantan ...	126,236	162	71	18	...
	Mohanpur ...		64	39	6	...
	Total ...	530,029	988	570	104	...
Contai ...	Contai ...	177,708	96	125	20	...
	Bahiri ...		24	30	4	...
	Basudebpur ...		104	29	8	...
	Ramnagar ...	76,007	120	60	13	...
	Pataspur ...	102,082	138	50	18	...
	Bhagwanpur ...	126,731	100	50	17	...
	Haria ...		64	32	6	...
	Egra ...	78,329	128	43	15	...
	Khajri ...	57,366	75	42	9	...
	Total ...	618,223	849	461	110	...
Tamluk ...	Tamluk ...	151,872	85	110	21	1
	Mayna ...		44	29	11	...
	Mohisadal ...	102,323	64	67	19	...
	Gewankhali ...		56	28	4	...
	Sutahata ...	74,246	98	58	17	...
	Nandigram ...	129,070	155	68	24	...
	Total ...	457,511	502	360	96	1
District Total ...	22	1,605,763	2,339	1,391	310	1

General effect of the proposals.

64. The above scheme will entail the construction of a district headquarters at Hijli and a subdivisional headquarters at Jhargram.

The increase in Civil Executive staff will be limited to 2 Deputy Magistrates and 3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates, as shown below :—

	Sanctioned.	Proposed.	Increase.
District Magistrates ...	2	2	Nil
Joint Magistrates	2	2	Nil
Deputy Magistrates ...	9	11	2
Sub-Deputy Magistrates ...	3	6	3

DACCA AND BAKARGANJ DISTRICTS.

Arguments for the partition of Dacca and Bakarganj.

65. So far as Mymensingh and Midnapur are concerned, the case for partition has been frequently put forward, and has won at any rate a moral victory, for its desirability has been pretty generally admitted, even though doubts may exist as to its expediency or as to the best method of effecting it. But in proposing the partition of

the Dacca and Bakarganj districts we are on untouched ground. Their division, though considered necessary by many experienced officers, has never been officially proposed, in view, no doubt, of the lack of success that has hitherto attended the efforts made to effect the partition of Mymensingh and Midnapur. It will therefore be necessary to support our case by somewhat detailed argument. We have found it impossible to draw any useful parallel between the volume of work in districts belonging to different provinces, where there are many items that cannot be compared for lack of a common denominator. It is necessary, therefore, to make the comparison with other districts in the same province, and, as far as possible, in an area of similar circumstance. For this reason we have drawn up a simple statistical comparison, which will be found in paragraph 67, of Dacca and Bakarganj with Mymensingh on the one hand—a district where the necessity for partition is obvious—and with Rangpur on the other; this latter district is, as we have stated before, quite capable of being managed as a single charge, in spite of its large population and area. If we find the administrative needs of Dacca and Bakarganj resemble those of Mymensingh more closely than those of Rangpur, we shall consider that a *primâ facie* case has been made out, and if in addition we find that these districts exhibit the same symptoms of inadequate administration that we have seen in Mymensingh and Midnapur, we shall have gone far towards proving our contention that partition is necessary.

Description of Dacca and Bakarganj Districts.

66. But before discussing the statistics, something must be said about the social, physical, and administrative difficulties which characterize the Dacca and Bakarganj districts. In the first place, we would invite a reference to the description of the Eastern Bengal country given in Chapter II. Whatever has been said there of the physical conditions of Eastern Bengal as a whole, applies with special force to these two districts. The country to the south and east of Dacca is a vast stretch of swampy rice fields, studded with an infinity of scattered groups of houses, and criss-crossed in every direction by a net-work of water-channels. These, while affording cheap, if not rapid, transit for the valuable crops that the country produces, are a severe obstacle to road-making, and render impossible the speedy journeys that can alone enable a small staff to perform administrative duties over a wide area. Difficult communications usually presuppose a poor, backward and scantily-peopled country; but these districts comprise perhaps the wealthiest, and certainly the most populous, tract in India. The high average level of intelligence and education among the population of these two districts is not remarkable, considering that that they contain a larger number of the *bhadralok* castes than any other mofussil district. One revenue thana of the Munshiganj Subdivision supports an entirely rural population of 2,996 to the square mile; and the subdivision itself, though it cannot boast a single municipal town, contains 23 high schools with an average of over 300 scholars in each, 12 middle and 592 primary schools, in an area of only 386 square miles. Though this is the most highly developed tract in either of the two districts, it is by no means in a class

apart; for even the comparatively backward southern subdivisions of Bakarganj contain from 600 to 800 primary schools apiece. This extensive system of education not only adds very appreciably to the work of the district, but is a sign of the intelligence and of the political and social aspirations of its people. The elasticity of the Bengal system of land tenure has given full scope to the individualistic tendencies of the people; and the ramifications of title and the *morcellement* of tenures add to the work of the Revenue Officer and are a fertile source of litigation. The strength of the Bar at Barisal and Dacca is but little less than at the town of Mymensingh.

Another cause, not only of litigation but actually of crime, is the large alluvial area in these districts. The innumerable streams are continually throwing up islands and alluvial accretions of valuable soil, which, unless constant vigilance is exercised by the officers of the district, become the subject of endless disputes often culminating in the most serious rioting. This is especially the case in Bakarganj, where agrarian disputes, arising from the extreme complication of tenures, are exceedingly common; where the scattered homesteads and the innumerable channels facilitate burglary and dacoity, and where the passionate and strongly individualistic nature of the people gave the district at one time a reputation for crimes of violence, which it has not yet entirely lost. The Muhammadans of this tract are an independent, and even at times a turbulent race, very different from their brothers of the northern districts, who are probably derived from the more peaceful aboriginal castes. Among a people of quick intelligence and easily-aroused passions the ill weeds of political disturbance and race hatred flourished apace; and the cities of Dacca and Barisal rapidly became as we have aleady shown, the *foci* of the most dangerous organizations of sedition. Though political disturbances like those which have characterized these districts during the past few years add enormously at the time to the work and anxiety of the district officer, they are not in themselves an argument for the permanent diminution of a charge. But they indicate the existence of a politically advanced people, a people with great possibilities for good or evil, requiring careful administrative guidance; and it is also certain that the effect which they are producing can never be entirely wiped out, and will always have to be reckoned with.

Statistical considerations.

67. We turn now to a detailed consideration of a few typical statistics which we have selected to help in our comparison of these four districts:—

Comparative Table of Work in Mymensingh, Dacca, Bakarganj and Rangpur Districts.

Districts.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Crime in 1912.		Civil Suits decided in 1912.	Schools.		Estates.	Separate Accounts.	Letters received.
			Magistrates' Cases.	Sessions Cases.		High and Middle.	Primary.			
Mymensingh	6,249	4,526,422	11,894	156	54,616	160	2,352	9,955	7,626	21,353
Dacca ...	2,777	2,960,402	6,563	157	49,238	130	2,148	11,029	8,917	17,863
Bakarganj	4,642	2,428,911	5,329	119	45,481	83	3,086	3,650	1,635	14,848
Rangpur ...	3,479	2,385,330	2,696	36	31,112	54	1,205	681	526	9,426

So far as mere area goes, the Dacca district is certainly in a lower class than the other three. But the 2,777 square miles that this district contains are far more difficult for a touring officer to cover than the 3,479 square miles of Rangpur with its higher-lying country and its numerous roads. The large area of Bakarganj, much of which, it must be remembered, consists of islands and channels, where tide and current are continually fighting over their task of building up a new land, obviously requires to be divided into districts of a size which will enable the Collector to acquire some knowledge of them during his tenure of office. There is not a wide difference between the populations of Dacca, Rangpur and Bakarganj, though that of the first-named approaches three millions; but, as has already been explained, the rural population of Rangpur are less intelligent and less impatient of control, while the educated classes are fewer. The criminal case work of both Dacca and Bakarganj is heavy, being much more than double that of Rangpur. The number of sessions cases in the two former districts are 157 and 119, against 156 in Mymensingh and 36 only in Rangpur. But there is no single test of the wealth and civilization of an Indian district equal to that of the number of its civil cases. The same nature and surroundings that tempt a man into litigation, will often lead him to break the law, and in any case to give a good deal more work to the administrative staff of a district than the simple peasant of Upper or Central India, who has neither the money to spend on law, nor the intelligence to appreciate its possibilities. Here we find Mymensingh, Dacca and Bakarganj standing in an altogether different class from Rangpur, or indeed from any other mofussil district of Bengal except Tippera. Figures like these are, in the case of a rural district, very striking, and to an officer experienced in Indian district work are in themselves a sufficient argument for partition.

In respect of education, again, the difference between the three districts of the Dacca Division and Rangpur is not less remarkable; and, if Bakarganj is behind the other two in secondary education, it must be remembered that it is a district in the making, and that its population and resources are rapidly increasing, as the jungle lands to the south of the district are being taken up. No inconsiderable addition to the Collector's work is entailed by the colonization and reclamation of these areas, once impenetrable tracts of thorny jungle, haunted by wild beasts and intersected by tidal streams, but now rapidly developing into a flourishing expanse of raiyatwari cultivation, which already pays over 7 lakhs of rupees as revenue to Government.

The subdivision of landed estates and the consequent revenue work is heavier in Dacca than even in Mymensingh; while in Bakarganj, though there is apparently less subdivision, there is yet notoriously a larger amount of subinfeudation than in any other district in the Province. Even the Bakarganj figures show that there are more than four times as many estate-owners to be dealt with in this district as in Rangpur.

The number of letters received in the district office is not always a safe guide; and we would not lay emphasis on them, did they not

entirely bear out the impression given by the rest of the statement regarding the comparative volume of work in all four districts.

Conclusions.

68. We are of opinion, then, that a scrutiny of the above statement has borne out our contention that Dacca and Bakarganj are considerably heavier districts than Rangpur, though they are lighter but not very much lighter, than Mymensingh, the heaviest district in Bengal, and probably in India. We have now to see if those districts exhibit any of the symptoms of under-administration which we have found in Midnapur and Mymensingh. This inquiry need not detain us long, for a reference to Chapter II will show how completely and for how long sedition obtained the upper hand in these two districts, and what is their present political state; while as regards their administrative condition, we would invite a perusal of the very able exposition of the difficulties of the situation contained in the letters* from the Magistrate of Dacca, already quoted in paragraph 33. The Committee spent, first and last, nearly three weeks in the Dacca district, and were in close and constant communication with this gentleman and with other officers of the district. We have been able therefore to form some opinion of the working of the district machinery, and have no hesitation in saying that the Magistrate, though an exceptionally able and hard-working officer, is not in a position to maintain effective control of the various branches of the administration.

Dacca District.

Proposals for Partition of Dacca District.

69. We now put forward our detailed proposals for the partiton of the Dacca District. One district will consist of the area which lies along the Meghna river, and the other district of the remainder. Our proposed Dacca District will consist of the present Sadar and Manikganj Subdivisions; and the Narayanganj District of the present Narayanganj and Munshiganj Subdivisions.

The new Dacca District.

70. The new Dacca District will retain Dacca as its headquarters. It will have an area of 1,750 square miles and a population of 1,488,431. The Manikganj Subdivisions needs no reduction; but a new subdivision must be created, comprising the northern part of the Sadar Subdivision which is much in need of relief. Its headquarters will be at Jaydebpur, and it will include the revenue thanas Kapasia and Sabhar, and the Jaydebpur police-station from the Keraniganj thana, the remaining portion of Keraniganj thana, with Nawabganj and Kotwali, forming the Sadar Subdivision.

This district will require the following Civil Executive staff:—

1 District Officer.
2 Civilian Subdivisional Officers at Jaydebpur and the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate, Subdivisional Officer at Manikganj.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the Sadar.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at Jaydebpur and Manikganj.
2 Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers for the Sadar.
3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers, one at each subdivision.

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* *Vide* Appendix I, No. 64, Annexure A.

The detailed information for the proposed district is given in the following table :—

DACCA DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Kotwali, Sutrapur and Lalbagh.	113,086	6	678	...	1
	Keraniganj ...	187,114	175	314	21	...
	Nawabganj ...	173,803	134	327	23	...
	Total ...	474,003	315	1,319	44	1
Jaydebpur ...	Kapasia ...	138,947	300	163	16	...
	Kaliganj ...	81,061	120	219	11	...
	Sabhar and Dhamrai.	174,284	... 370	182	25	...
	Kaliakoir ...	90,391	...	136	12	...
	Jaydebpur ...	54,933	135	114	7	...
	Total ...	539,616	925	814	71	...
Manikganj ...	Manikganj and Singair.	221,377	218	372	36	...
	Harirampur ...	95,389	94	140	20	...
	Gheor (Sealo)...	114,568	198	187	18	...
	Aricha ...	43,478		73	9	...
	Total ...	474,812	510	772	83	...
District Total ...	16 ...	1,488,431	1,750	2,905	198	1

71. The Narayanganj District will have an area of 1,027 square miles and a population of 1,471,971. The headquarters will be on the bank of the Lakhya river, as close to the present town of Narayanganj as may be practicable. In the case of this district also the Sadar or Narayanganj Subdivision should be relieved by the establishment of a new subdivision on the north. It should comprise the Raipura thana and the Narsingdi police-station from Rupganj thana, leaving the remainder of Rupganj and the Narayanganj thana to form the Sadar Subdivision. The headquarters of the new subdivision should be located at or close to Narsingdi. **The Narayanganj District.**

The district will require the following Civil Executive officers :—

1 District Officer.

2 Civilian Subdivisional Officers at Munshiganj and the Sadar.

1 Deputy Magistrate, Subdivisional Officer at Narsingdi.

2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the Sadar.

2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at Munshiganj and Narsingdi.

1 Deputy Magistrate with second or third class powers at the Sadar.

3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers, one at each subdivision.

The following table gives the detailed figures for this district :—

NARAYANGANJ DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Narayanganj ...	187,761	116	461	19	1
	Rupganj ...	168,838	150	225	20	...
	Total ...	356,599	266	686	39	1
Narsingdi ...	Narsingdi ...	93,871	77	151	13	...
	Raipura ...	209,302	298	315	28	...
	Monohardi ...	119,792		169	13	...
	Total ...	422,965	375	635	54	...
Munshiganj ...	Munshiganj ...	249,924	87	387	18	...
	Tangibari ...		45	58	12	...
	Rajabari ...	65,297	65	78	10	...
	Srinagar and Serajdikhan.	234,628	189	381	28	...
	Lohajang ...	142,558		236	17	...
	Total ...	692,407	386	1,140	85	...
District Total ...	11 ...	1,471,971	1,027	2,461	178	1

General effect of the proposals.

72. The partition of Dacca will necessitate the construction of a district headquarters at Narayanganj and two subdivisional headquarters at Jaydebpur and Narsingdi.

The Civil Executive staff will have to be increased by one Joint Magistrate, one Deputy Magistrate, and two Sub-Deputy Magistrates, as shown in the following table :—

	Sanctioned.	Proposed.	Increase.
District Magistrates	2	2	Nil
Joint Magistrates and Civilian Subdivisional Officers.	3	4	1
Deputy Magistrates with full powers and Subdivisional Officers.	10	10	Nil
Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers.	2	3	1
Sub-Deputy Magistrates	4	6	2

BAKARGANJ DISTRICT.

Special topographical difficulties of Partition of Bakarganj.

73. We have already given our reasons for holding that the Bakarganj District is too large and difficult to be allowed to remain a single charge. But an inquiry into the best method of effecting the partition reveals the existence of serious physical difficulties.

In the first place, the line of division must necessarily run east and west, in order to divide the district into areas similar in physical and political conditions. A north and south line would also create great difficulties in the location of headquarters, would greatly

inconvenience the inhabitants of the rich and populous north-western corner of the district, and would involve too great an interference with existing revenue divisions. But the island of Bhola, separated from the main land by a wide but difficult channel and constituting the compact subdivision of Dakhin Shahbazpur, lies exactly athwart a line of division from east to west, across the centre of the district. In the next place, the communications, which are mostly by river, run north and south; whereas a division east and west is apt to substitute, in the case of many parts of the district, a journey first by river, then by land, and then in some cases by river again, for a direct river route to the subdivisional or district headquarters. The various schemes put forward by local officers have been thoroughly discussed by the Committee; and Mr. Beatson Bell, one of our members, whose knowledge of Bakarganj is unequalled, paid a second visit to the district and examined on the spot all the essential points of the scheme on which we have finally decided.

It has been found necessary in this scheme to put parts of one or two revenue thanas and even of a police-station into different subdivisions and districts. But we are convinced that such divisions are necessary, to secure the convenience of the people residing in the localities affected; and as the record-of-rights of the district has been prepared, any difficulties which may be caused to the Revenue authorities and landlords by splitting up thanas will disappear, once the corrections are made in the records. The scheme is described below.

The Barisal District.

74. The north-western part of the existing district will form the new district of Barisal, and will consist of (1) the present Sadar Subdivision, with the exception of the Bakarganj thana; (2) the present Pirojpur Subdivision, with the exception of the Patharghata police-station; and (3) the Betagi police-station from the Patuakhali Subdivision. The area of this district will be 2,142 square miles, and the population 1,407,688. The district should be divided into three subdivisions. The Pirojpur Subdivision will lose the Bamna and Patharghatta police-stations and the eastern part of Bhandaria thana, and will then have an area of about 800 square miles, with a population of 429,413. The exact figures are not obtainable, as new police-stations, for which there are no separate statistics, have been included. The Sadar Subdivision will be relieved of Jhalukati, Nalchiti and Bakarganj thanas, and will have an area of 873 square miles and a population of 591,147. The third subdivision will have its headquarters at Jhalukati, and comprise Jhalukati and Nalchiti thanas, the eastern part of Bhandaria thana, and the Bamna and Betagi police-stations. Jhalukati is not only an important trade centre and the headquarters of the great Bhukailash zamindari, but a focus of sedition; and a strong Subdivisional Officer is here an urgent political necessity. We would draw attention to the fact that the headquarters of both the outlying subdivisions of this district will be on the steamer route between Barisal and Khulna. The Jhalukati Subdivision will have an area of 469 square miles and a population of 337,128. The Bishkhali river will traverse it from north-east to south-west and will form a most convenient highway.

This district will require the following staff of Civil Executive officers :—

1 District Officer.
2 Civilian Subdivisional Officers at the Sadar and Jhalukati.
1 Deputy Magistrate, Subdivisional Officer, at Pirojpur.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers at the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate with first class powers at Pirojpur.
2 Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers at the Sadar.
3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers, one at each subdivision.

The detailed statistics of this district are given in the table below :—

BARISAL DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Kotwali with Babuganj.	153,397	152	386	28	1
	Gaurnadi, Wazirpur, and Muladi.	263,596	376	335	49	...
	Mehdiganj and Badartuni.	174,154	345	275	33	...
	Total ...	591,147	873	996	110	1
Jhalukati ...	Jhalukati and Rajapur.	167,305	190	373	34	1
	Nalchiti ...	82,335	85	182	19	1
	Part of Bhandaria.	66,000	77	66	16	...
	Pamna ...	20,000	50	46	7	...
	Betagi ...	51,488	67	79	12	...
	Total ...	387,128	469	746	88	2
Pirojpur ...	Pirojpur and Kowkhali.	122,935	262	244	28	1
	Part of Bhandaria.	33,809	41	35	9	...
	Matbaria ...	68,000	164	100	16	...
	Sárupkati, Banaripara, and Nazirpur.	204,669	333	248	48	...
	Total ...	429,413	800	627	101	1
District Total ...	20	1,407,688	2,142	2,369	299	4

The new Bakarganj District.

75. The south-eastern part of the district, comprising the whole seaboard area, will form the second district, which may be designated Bakarganj. It will comprise (1) the whole of the Dakhin Shahbazpur Subdivision; (2) the whole of the present Patuakhali Subdivision with the exception of Betagi police-station; (3) the Patharghata police-station from Pirojpur Subdivision; and (4) the Bakarganj thana from the Sadar Subdivision. The best place for the headquarters of the district will be on the right bank of the Tetulia river at or near Taterkati. This is practically a maritime site with a climate tempered by cool sea breezes, and easily accessible by water from all parts of

the district. The old Hindu capital of the district was situated in this neighbourhood. We do not consider Patuakhali to be at all a suitable place for the headquarters of a district, and we have not found a more conveniently situated place than Taterkati, or one more desirable from all points of view. The population of this district will be only 1,021,223; but the area is 2,500 square miles, and the thinly populated *sundarban* tract is rapidly filling up. The Dakhin Shabhazpur Subdivision will remain unaltered. The Sadar Subdivision will consist of the Bakarganj and Bauphal thanas, and the Patuakhali and Mirzaganj police-stations, with an area of 648 square miles and a population of 421,634. The rest of the district, comprising the whole of the *sundarban* area along the sea coast, will form a third subdivision, with headquarters at Amtoli. It will consist of the Galachipa and Amtoli thanas and the Patharghata police-station, and will have an area of 1,059 square miles, but a population of only 281,252.

This district will require the following Civil Executive staff:—

1 District Officer.
2 Civilian Subdivisional Officers at Bhola and Amtoli.
1 Deputy Magistrate, Subdivisional Officer at the Sadar.
2 Deputy Magistrates with first class powers, at the Sadar.
1 Deputy Magistrate with first class powers, who will also be the Colonization Officer at Amtoli.
1 Deputy Magistrate with second or third class powers at the Sadar.
3 Sub-Deputy Magistrates with second or third class powers, one at each subdivision.

The detailed information for this district is given in the following table:—

BAKARGANJ DISTRICT.

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Sadar ...	Bakarganj ...	144,397	147	242	27	...
	Patuakhali and Mirzaganj.	156,982	343	242	31	1
	Bauphal ...	120,255	158	117	23	...
	Total ...	421,634	648	601	81	1
Amtoli ...	Patharghata ...	35,005	106	20	10	...
	Amtoli and Barguna.	144,952	624	278	26	...
	Galachipa ...	101,295	329	88	23	...
	Total ...	281,252	1,059	386	59	...
Dakhin Shahbazpur.	Bhola and Daulatkhan.	167,092	309	337	26	...
	Borhanuddin and Tazumuddin.	151,245	484	161	22	...
	Total ...	318,337	793	498	48	...
District Total ...	12	1,021,223	2,500	1,485	188	1

General effect of the proposals.

76. The partition of the Bakarganj District will entail the construction of a new district headquarters at Taterkati and two subdivisional headquarters at Jhalukati and Amtoli, besides a police-station in the eastern part of Bhandaria.

The net increase in the Civil Executive staff will be two Deputy Magistrates and two Sub-Deputy Magistrates, as shown in the table below :—

	Sanctioned.	Proposed.	Increase.
District Magistrates ...	2	2	Nil
Civilian Subdivisional Officers and Joint Magistrates.	4	4	Nil
Deputy Magistrate Subdivisional Officers.	.....	2	2
Deputy Magistrates ...	8 + 1 Colonization Officer.	9, including Colonization Officer.	Nil
Sub-Deputy Magistrates	4	6	2

The present khas mahal staff should be divided between the two districts according to requirements. We recommend that the khas mahal Circle Officers should, whenever possible, be employed as Circle Officers for the Circle System which we are proposing; and, *vice versâ*, that Circle Officers employed in village administration should, whenever possible, be employed on khas mahal duties.

Proposed Barisal Division.

Proposals for a Barisal Division.

77. The results of these proposals will be to add four more districts to the already heavy charge of the Commissioner of Dacca. We are of opinion that his existing charge, with a population in excess of 12 millions, is at any time, in view of the peculiar administrative difficulties which we have already described, by far the heaviest Commissionership with which any member of the Committee is personally acquainted; and its present difficult and dangerous political situation accentuates its responsibilities. The coming University will certainly lay a serious additional burden on the Commissioner; and the division of his four districts into eight, necessary though it is for the relief of his District Officers, will greatly increase his own work. During the next few years, too, the introduction of the partitions themselves and of the other reforms advocated in this report cannot fail to make great demands on his time.

The statement below exhibits the areas and population of the different Provinces of India, with the number of Commissioners in each case :—

Province.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Number of Commissioners.
Bengal	78,412	45,483,077	5
Bihar and Orissa	111,853	38,432,776	5
United Provinces	107,494	47,182,044	9
Punjab	133,741	24,172,201	5
Bombay	188,745	27,074,570	4
Central Provinces	130,991	16,035,043	5
Burma	237,000	12,115,217	8

78. It must be remembered that Bihar and Orissa, the Punjab, Bombay, and the Central Provinces contain large areas of Native territory. If, then, Commissioners have a recognized place in the administration of a Province, it is clear that there can be no objection to a proposal to increase the five Bengal Divisions to six, and to reduce their average population from over 9 millions to under 7½ millions; and we recommend that, when the partitions of the three districts of Mymensingh, Dacca and Bakarganj are effected, another Commissionership be created, with headquarters at Barisal, to include the districts of Bakarganj, Barisal, Faridpur and Khulna. The Dacca Division will consist of the districts of Dacca, Narayanganj, Mymensingh, Kishorganj and Gopalpur. This arrangement will have the effect of relieving the heavily-tasked Presidency Commissioner of the charge of Khulna, a district which closely resembles in most respects the districts of Faridpur and Bakarganj, with which we propose it should be included.

Creation of New Subdivisions.

New Subdivision in Tippera District.

79. The Tippera district has an area of 2,499 square miles and a population of 2,430,138. The people of this district are notoriously litigious, and the proportion to the population of cases reported or instituted is higher than in any other district. The following table gives the area, population and the average of cases instituted and tried in the years 1910 to 1912:—

Subdivisions.	Area in square miles.	Population.	Cases reported to Police and Magistrate.	Cases tried.
Sadar	1,142	1,099,060	8,081	2,297
Brahmanbaria ...	769	757,283	5,219	1,990
Chandpur	588	573,805	2,772	1,005

The pressure is heaviest in the Sadar and Brahmanbaria subdivisions. Proposals have been made from time to time to create another subdivision to relieve these two. In Brahmanbaria there are at present two full-powered Deputy Magistrates and a Sub-Deputy Magistrate with second class powers, as well as an Honorary Magistrate sitting singly and vested with first class powers, to assist the Subdivisional Officer. The necessity of the partition has already been accepted by the Conference of Commissioners at Darjeeling in 1912, and we desire to add our support to this recommendation.

We propose that a new subdivision should be formed in the district in the following manner. The northern part of the district, consisting of the present Brahmanbaria Subdivision and the revenue thanas Muradnagar and Daudkhandi, should be divided into two subdivisions. The headquarters of the one will remain at Brahmanbaria; and that of the outlying subdivision, comprising Muradnagar and

Daudkhandi thanas and the Bancharampur outpost of the Nabinagar thana, at Muradnagar or Ramchandrapur. The area of the Brahmanbaria Subdivision will be 700 square miles with a population of 672,597, and of the Muradnagar Subdivision 499 square miles, with a population of 562,795.

The details, thana by thana, are shown in the table below :—

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Police cases reported in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Brahmanbaria	Brahmanbaria and Sarail.	242,132	252	322	27	1
	Narayanganj ...	93,348	127	138	14	...
	Kasba ...	159,463	157	190	25	...
	Nabinagar ...	177,654	164	199	23	...
	Total ...	672,597	700	849	89	1
Muradnagar	Muradnagar ...	234,622	225	440	27	...
	Daudkhandi ...	243,487	40	149	19	...
	Homna ...		165	93	9	...
	Bancharampur	84,686	69	68	11	...
	Total ...	562,795	499	750	66	1

We do not think that any reduction of the staff at Brahmanbaria would be rendered possible by the creation of the Muradnagar Subdivision. This subdivision will require two full-powered Deputy Magistrates, including the Subdivisional Officer, who could be transferred from Comilla, and a Sub-Deputy Magistrate with second class powers.

New Subdivision in Pabna District.

80. The partition of the Serajganj Subdivision was also considered necessary by the Commissioners' Conference held in 1912. In order to ascertain if this recommendation should form a part of their proposals, three members of the Committee visited Serajganj and discussed the question with the Subdivisional Officer and the Collector and other officials and non-officials. We found that it had already proved necessary to effect a partial partition of the subdivision by posting a full-powerd Deputy Magistrate to Shahzadpur, in addition to the one working at Serajganj itself. A fourth member of the Committee, who was for two and a half years Subdivisional Officer at Serajganj, has also long been convinced of the necessity for its partition. There appeared to be no local opposition to the proposal in Serajganj. The subdivision is an exceedingly heavy one, and the area included in the south-eastern part of the Sadar Subdivision also seems to be neglected. We therefore recommend that a new subdivision be formed in the south-eastern corner of the district, comprising Shahzadpur and Chauhali police-stations from Serajganj, and Mathura, Sainthia, and East Sujanagar police-stations from Sadar. The headquarters should be at Bera.

The western side, comprising Madaripur, Gopalpur, Rajair and Shibchar police-stations, should form one subdivision with headquarters at Madaripur. The eastern half, consisting of Janjira, Palong, Bhedarganj, and Gosoir Hât police-stations, will form the new subdivision. Mr. Woodhead, the Collector of Faridpur, proposed that the headquarters of the new subdivision should be at Burirhat in the centre of Palong thana. We are not inclined to support this, as Burirhat cannot be approached by boat except during the floods, and its only connection with a steamer station is by footpath five miles long. We think that the headquarters should be on the Kirtinasha river at a suitable place between Domshar and Bhojeswar steamer stations.

The following table will give the particulars of the proposed subdivisions :—

Subdivisions.	Police-stations.	Population.	Area in square miles.	Cases reported to Police in 1912.	Village Unions.	Municipalities.
Madaripur ...	Madaripur, Gopalpur and Rajair.	265,517	300	470	73	1
	Shibchar ...	181,309	124	336	25	...
	Total ...	446,826	424	806	98	1
Palong ...	Palong, Gosair Hat and Bhedarganj.	355,430	286	580	73	...
	Janjira ,...	58,512	77	83	15	...
	Total ...	413,942	363	663	88	...

PART III.

The Basis for a Subordinate Agency.

CHAPTER V.

Maintenance of the Record-of-rights.

Desirability of maintenance as a basis for a Subordinate Agency.

82. This is a question which has been considered for many years, both by the Government of Bengal and by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. The views of the Bengal Government were set forth in detail in Mr. Kerr's letters No. 1098, dated the 5th March 1912, and No. 31, dated the 6th January 1913, to the address of the Government of India. The first of these letters relates to Orissa, and the second to the Presidency of Bengal as now constituted. In both letters the Local Government has recommended that action should be postponed. At the same time the Governor in Council has stated that he "fully recognizes the advantages which would be derived from a maintenance scheme, if the necessary funds were forthcoming, if a trustworthy local staff were available, and if the co-operation of the people could be secured." We have been asked to consider whether "it is possible and desirable to create subordinate revenue establishments in connection with the maintenance of land records and the collection of information regarding revenue subjects," or, as the case may be otherwise stated, whether the maintenance of the settlement record is a sufficiently desirable end in itself to warrant our recommending it as the best basis for any subordinate revenue establishment that we may propose to create. We have therefore studied the voluminous literature on the subject, including the tentative scheme prepared for East Bengal by one of our members, Mr. Beatson Bell. In the course of our tours in Bengal we have also taken evidence from many witnesses, official and non-official, concerning the advisability or otherwise of maintaining the record-of-rights, and concerning the respective merits of periodical revision and continuous maintenance. We have also made a point of examining the working of the latter system in permanently-settled villages in the United Provinces and Madras and in malguzari villages in the Central Provinces. Moreover, during the course of our visit to Bihar and Orissa, we had the advantage of hearing the views of the Director of Land Records of that Province and of seeing the maps and papers which are being prepared in connection with the revision of the record in North Bihar.

Progress of preparation of Record-of-rights in Bengal.

83. As Government are aware, the districts of Bakarganj and Chittagong have complete records-of-rights. Settlement operations are practically complete in Faridpur and Jalpaiguri, are far advanced in Dacca and Mymensingh, and are in progress in Rajshahi and Midnapur. In most of the remaining districts there are records-of-rights for individual estates, some of which are of considerable extent. Taking the Province as a whole, the figures stand thus :—

Record-of-rights.			Record-of-rights to be prepared.	Total settled area of the Province.
Completed.	Under preparation.	Total.		
Square miles.	Square miles.	Square miles.	Square miles.	Square miles.
10,921	12,496	23,417	41,794	65,211

It will be seen that 17·1 per cent. of the Province is already provided with accurate maps and records, and that within a few years as much as 36·7 per cent. will be so provided. We have compared the difficulty of the work with that of other Provinces in India, and we are impressed by the fact that in no Province are the difficulties so great, or the work so complicated, as in Bengal. At the same time we have compared the finished work in Bengal with that of other Provinces, and we are satisfied that in no Province has the work been better done. Those of us who come from other Provinces were particularly impressed by the zeal and efficiency of the Bengal kanungos and by the excellence of the printed records which are now being prepared. It was also most satisfactory to find that the maps and records of the Bengal Settlement Department, even though they are not maintained or revised, are of enormous advantage to all branches of the administration, and greatly facilitate the working of the civil courts. The good which has been done in settling agrarian disputes, in disseminating a knowledge of the rent law, and in protecting the peasantry from illegal exactions cannot be too highly estimated.

Popular appreciation of the Record-of-rights.

84. On the usefulness of these documents to landlords aud tenants almost all the Bengal witnesses whom we examined were unanimous; and many of them expressed an opinion in favour of their continuous maintenance by a local agency. For instance, we would invite attention to the evidence of the Hon'ble Mr. Byomkesh Chakravarti, who came to us as the accredited representative of the Bengal Landholders' Association. This witness stated that "the maintenance of the record would be valuable" and "he would prefer yearly maintenance to periodical revision." The proposal, he thought, "would not be unpopular, as it would save them (the zamindars) a lot of trouble in the courts," but he added that "the zamindars would not like paying." Not less remarkable was the evidence of Mr. Sachse, the experienced Settlement Officer of Mymensingh, who placed before us the views of the raiyats of that district. He told us that the raiyats would not only welcome a system of continuous maintenance, but that they have already begun to clamour for it and would gladly pay their share of the cost. But however much we were impressed by the tenor of the Bengal evidence in favour of continuous maintenance, we desire to avoid the error of laying too much stress upon it. It is probable that many of those who now support the policy in the abstract would strongly criticize any concrete scheme which is put forward, as the landlords of Bakarganj actually did in the case of the scheme formulated by Mr. Beatson Bell. It is also certain that the landlords and tenants, who now express a readiness to bear a portion of the cost, would grumble when called upon to pay it.

Conditions under which Record-of-rights is maintained in other Provinces.

85. When we visited other Provinces we found systems of record maintenance working smoothly and satisfactorily everywhere, not only in raiyatwari tracts, but also in tracts where there are intermediate landlords between Government and the cultivators. We were struck by the fact that in other Provinces the recorders not only correct the maps and records, but also note the payments of rent. As far as we are aware, it has never been suggested in any scheme for record-maintenance in Bengal, that the recorders should concern themselves with payments of rent. Any such proposal would in our opinion be altogether impracticable in Bengal, and it is well that this

should be clearly understood. We made particular inquiries regarding the relationship which exists in other Provinces between the landlords and their agents on the one hand and the maintenance staff on the other. In some places the landlords and their agents make their annual collections from the tenants on the basis of the maintenance papers and in direct communication with the maintenance staff. In other places the collections are made more or less independently of the maintenance staff; but in all cases the landlords consult the latter and bring their papers into accord with those of the maintenance staff, before they take coercive steps against those raiyats who have fallen into arrears of rent. Everywhere we found a marked spirit of co-operation and a marked absence of friction; and we are persuaded that, if the system which we found working so smoothly in other Provinces (and which some of us have seen working well both in raiyatwari and zamindari tracts in Assam) could be introduced into Bengal, it would be an undoubted boon both to the landlords and the tenants. On the other hand, we fully realize the difficulties of the problem. We appreciate the fact that the smoothness with which the system works elsewhere is largely due to three causes :—

First, that the people of other Provinces have always been accustomed to this system and regard it as the natural state of affairs;

Secondly, that the rent-suits in other Provinces are dealt with by Revenue Officers, who work under the control of the District Collector, who also controls the agency of maintenance; and

Thirdly, that in other Provinces each raiyat generally pays a lump rent to a single landlord or group of landlords.

In Bengal, on the other hand, the system would be strange both to landlords and tenants: the rent-suits are dealt with by the civil courts; and the tenants often pay their rents in minute separate sums to five or six, sometimes even to 50 or 60 different, landlords or groups of landlords.

Peculiar difficulties of maintenance in Bengal

86. But the argument which weighed most of all with those members of the Committee who belonged to Provinces where a land record system existed, was the fact that the entries of a current record-of-rights would not be accepted by a civil court in Bengal, unless maintained with the help of an extremly costly supervising staff. In the United Provinces and Central Provinces the maintained record admittedly contains certain imperfections of survey; and in the rare cases (occurring mostly in the former Province) where the *khewat*, or record of proprietary right, is especially elaborate, mistakes of title are occasionally found, while a certain small percentage of errors of possession or tenure are also met with in the case of tenants' holdings. Yet the growth of custom has led even the civil courts to attach in practice a degree of validity to these records which is not warranted by any legal enactment. Starting from a time when the courts had at their disposal but very imperfect means of discovering the facts about possession or tenure, we soon find them relying more and more on the patwari's record, as its general average of accuracy was proved by experience to be high. It is not claimed that the record is accepted without frequent—often inconveniently frequent—summonses to the patwari to appear in court, but compared with the volume of civil litigation in Bengal, that of the United Provinces and

Central Provinces is trival, while the bulk of cases, including rent-cases, that involve reference to a maintained record are tried by Revenue Officers, whose tours enable them in many instances to take up cases on the spot, and whose responsibility for the work of the patwari ensures every care being taken not to summon him unnecessarily, or detain him unduly.

From this state of affairs conditions in Bengal differ *toto cœlo*. Here, the prescription of rules having the force of law, under which an entry in the record-of rights must have been attestated by a gazetted officer before it can be treated as proof presumptive, is certain to be rigidly enforced. Mr. Reid. the Director of Land Records in Bihar and Orissa, put before us the somewhat surprising statement that in Orissa, where this standard of perfection has at great expense been attained, in not a single case have the civil courts made use of the maintained records during five years.

Costly nature of supervising establishment.

87. Even apart from this difficulty, we find ourselves confronted with the following dilemma: either we must expect to see the patwaris chained to constant attendance on the courts, with a consequent breakdown of the land records system; or we must recommend the maintenance of a large gazetted staff, though even this would probably not entirely free the patwari from attendance in mesne profit suits and the like, where questions of the crops sown and their outturn are in issue. The cost of such a staff would be out of all proportion to that entertained in any other Province. For a Bengal record-of-rights is in itself a totally different and infinitely more formidable document that anything of its kind elsewhere. We have been informed that in the United Provinces it is in villages with an elaborate record of proprietary right that the patwari is most apt to be in fault. But the "tenure tree" of a Bengal mauza exhibits complications entirely unparalleled in any other Province in India. The original ownership of the village has in many cases been split into a bewildering maze of vertical and horizontal sub-divisions that require a skilled agency to trace out and record. Where proprietary tenures are quite commonly found seven and eight deep, and in some cases 12, 15, or even 17 tenure-holders are recorded one below another; where each of these strata of proprietorship is divided up among equally numerous sharers; where a single proprietor very frequently holds tenures in several of these strata; and where, finally, most of the tenure-holders are absentees, and not continuously represented in the village: here is a state of things in the face of which an agency like that in the United Provinces and Central Provinces would be entirely helpless. To give some idea of the complications which exist we have annexed to this report a copy of the largest "tenure tree" from the records of Bakarganj that the limitations of book-binding would allow to be inserted. It would have been easy to find a "tree" four or five times as large. This "tenure tree" shows the landlord-interest in the single village of South Chauddabaria. One of these "tenure trees" was prepared for every one of the two thousand and odd villages in the district. And it must be remembered that these "tenure trees" do not show the raiyats at all. The raiyats and the under-raiyats will only be found in the volume of the *khatians*. It is obvious from the study of the "tenure tree" that nearly every correction which is made involves many corollary corrections in the papers, both of the superior and inferior interests.

Mauza {Name—South Chaudubaria. R. S. No. 1915.} **Pargana—Chandradwip.** **Thana** {Name—Patuakhali. No. 7.} **District—Bakarganj.**

ESTATE 1720.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 -4-15	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 4-15	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 1-7-2	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 1-7-2	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 1-9	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 -1-	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 -0-10-	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 -0-10-	Zamindari Chandradwip -0-5-12-2-2 -0-10-
Radha Charan Ray Choudhury.	Hira Lal Ray Choudhury.	Raj Kumar Ray Choudhury.	Sarada Sundari Choudhurani.	Biraj Mohan Ray Choudhury, and others.	Pyari Mohan Ray Choudhury.	Nistarini Choudhurani.	Bhagabati Choudhurani.	Dwarika Nath Ray, and others.

10
P. T. Radha Raman Ray Choudhury. Self.

11		12		13
Jimba Sonamala, etc. -12-		Jimba Sonamala, etc. -4-		Jimba Harigopi Basu.
Bhabarangini Debya.		Nistarini Choudhurani.		Akshay Kumar Chanda.

14/1	14/2	15	16	17	18/1	18/2	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		30
N. H. Hosanuddi Meikar -12-	N. H. Hosanuddi Meikar -4-	N. H. Srikanta Shaha -10-5	N. H. Srikanta Shaha -2-17-2	N. H. Srikanta Shah -2-17-2	Jot Sasthi Charan Das and others. -8-	Jot Sasthi Charan Das and others. -8-	H. Sundarali Sikdar.	H. Firali Sikdar.	H. Komarali and others.	H. Manirudi Sikdar.	H. Ibrahim Meikar.	H. Jharu Chaukidar.	H. Bolak Dakua.	H. Rupi Bibi and others.	Brahmatra Basaram Bachaspati.	H. Ramlochan Basu. -8-	N. H. Ramdayal Dhupi.		M. I. Uma Charan Ghose.
Ibrahim Meikar.	Lalu Meikar.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Purnima.	Nistarini Choudhurani.	Sasthi Charan Das and others.	Pyari Mohan Das and others.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Rasik Chandra Chakravarty and others.	Tara Prasanna Sarkel and others.	Nanda Kumar Dhupi and others.		Bhabarangini Debya.

31	32	33	34	34 (A)	35		36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43			44	45	46	47	48/1	48/2	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57		58		
O. N. H. Amanulla.	O. N. H. Jonabdi.	M. K. Sundarali Sikdar.	O. N. H. Sadagar Garibulla.	O. N. H. Samiruddi and others.	O. N. H. Saharuddi.		N. H. Sundarali Sikdar.	N. H. Firali Sikdar.	N. H. Komarali Sikdar.	N. H. Manirudi Sikdar.	N. H. Lalu-Ibrahim Meikar.	N. H. Jharu Chaukidar.	N. H. Balai Dakua.	N. H. Rupi Bibi and others.			H. Ramlochan Basu. -8-	H. Balaki Dakua.	H. Jonabali.	N. H. Golak Dhupi.	N. H. Gopi Chandra Das. -8-	N. H. Gopi Chandra Das. -8-	N. H. Nasal Shil and others.	N. H. Ram Dayal Dhupi.	N. H. Rupai.	N. H. Pasanulla.	N. H. Lalu Meikar.	N. H. Lal Mahmad.	N. H. Wahedali Chaukidar.	N. H. Amanulla.	N. H. Dayari Sikdar.		N. H. Muniraddi Sikdar.		(113-117.)
Aripulla and others.	Self.	Abdul Sikdar and others.	Sadagar and others.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.		Abdul Sikdar and others.	Saadatali and others.	Self.	Maniruddi Sikdar and others.	Lalu-Meikar and others.	Wahedali and others.	Self.	Self.			Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Sasthi Charan Das and others.	Pyari Mohan Das and others.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Bhabarangini Debya.		Bhabarangini Debya.		

59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77
K. M. I. Uma Charan Ghosh.	N. H. Balai Dakua.	N. H. Jonabali.	O. N. H. Golak Dhupi and others. -8-	O. N. H. Golak Dhupi and others. -8-	O. N. H. Nasal Shil and others. -8-	O. N. H. Nasal Shil and others. -8-	O. N. H. Ramdayal Dhupi.	O. N. H. Ukiuddi.	O. N. H. Pasanulla.	O. N. H. Lalu Meikar.	O. N. H. Kali Bibi.	O. N. H. Wahed Ali Chaukidar.	O. N. H. Kamal Jan Bibi.	O. N. H. Imamaddi Sikdar.	O. N. H. Abdus Sobhan.	O. N. H. Nababjan Bibi.	O. N. H. Abdul Sikdar.	O. N. H. Kamarali Sikdar.
Bhabarangini Debya.	Self.	Self.	Kali Charan Dhupi.	Ram Kamal Dhupi and others.	Bagiram Shil and others.	Subarnamayi	Nanda Kumar Dhupi and others.	Self.	Self.	Lalu Meikar and others.	Rupi Bibi and others.	Wahedali Chaukidar and others.	Self.	Self.	Abdus Sobhan and others.	Self.	Abdul and others.	Self.

78	79			80		81	82	83		84		85			86	87	88	89	90
N. H. Abdul Sikdar and others.	N. H. Sadagar.			O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali.		O. N. H. Saharuddi and others.	O. N. H. Nadu and others.	M. K. Karimuddi Chaukidar.		N. H. Lakshmi Narayan Ghose. -5-		N. H. Lakshmi Narayan Ghosh. -11-			N. H. Daori Sikdar,	N. H. Sona Khan.	N. H. Kesab Khan.	M. K. Kamaljan Bibi.	O. N. H. Janabali and others.
Abdul Sikdar and others.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.			Nakuleswar Ganguli.		Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.		Bhabarangini Debya.		Tara Prasanna Sarkhel.			Bhabarangini Debya.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.

91		92	93		94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107
O. N. H. Garibulla.		O. N. H. Sadaruddi.	N. O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali and others -8-		N. O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali and others -8-	N. O. N. H. Saharuddi.	N. O. N. H. Karimuddi and others.	K. K. Karimuddi Chaukidar.	O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali and others.	O. N. H. Janabali and others.	O. N. H. Mamud Akan.	O. N. H. Nababjan Bibi and others.	O. N. H. Nadu and others.	O. N. H. Adari.	O. N. H. Imamaddi Sikdar.	O. N. H. Sona Khan.	O. N. H Abid Molla.	K. K. Chhedu Sarip.
Self.		Self.	Aroz Ali Dhali.		Samiruddi Dhali.	Self.	Karimuddi and others.	Karimuddi Chaukidar and others.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Nakuleswar Ganguli.	Bhabarangini Debya.	Self.	Self.	Self.	Self.

108		109	110	111	112	113
N. O. N. H Samiruddi Dhali and others. -8-		N. O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali and others. -8-	N. O. N. H. Cadal Molla.	N. O. N. H. Saharuddi.	N. O. N. H. Karimuddi and others.	N. O. N. H. Jonabdi.
Araz Ali Dhali and others.		Samiruddi Dhali.	Jaun Bibi.	Self.	Karimuddi and others.	Arabdi and others.

114
M. K. Kalai. Self.

(30)

115		116		117
N. H. Samiruddi Dhali.		O. N. H. Saharuddin.		N. H. Sadagar and Sadak.
Nakuleswar Ganguli.		Nakuleswar Ganguli.		Nakuleswar Ganguli.

118		119	120	121		122
N. O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali. -8-		N. O. N. H. Samiruddi Dhali. -8-	N. O. N. H. Saharuddi.	O. N. H. Sadaruddi.		O. N. H. Garibulla.
Samiruddi Dhali.		Araz Ali Dhali and others.	Self.	Self.		Self.

EXPLA

The upper portion of each compartment shows the name of the tenure; the lowe

H.—Howla.
N. H.—Nimhowla.
O. N. H.—Onat nim howla.

N. O. N. H.—Nir
P. T.—Pa
M. I.—Mi

wholder.

I.—Kaim Miras Ijara.
.—Kaim Karsha.
.—Miras Karsha.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the continuous maintenance of a record-of-rights in Bengal will entail an expense out of all proportion to that which suffices for the Land Records Departments of other provinces; while the direct financial justification for this expense that exists in temporarily-settled tracts is not found here. The cost, too, will bear an alarmingly high proportion to the comparatively small land revenue paid in Bengal.

We recognize that, whatever may be the arguments for the introduction of a system of maintenance under ordinary circumstances, they are not based on the urgent social, political, or economic considerations arising out of the present extraordinary state of affairs existing in Bengal, that have provided the justification for the measures we have proposed in this report. These proposals, while necessary, will be so costly to introduce and to maintain that we have, with whatever reluctance, found it necessary to recommend the postponement from present consideration of the system of continuous maintenance.

Postponement of system of maintenance.

88. In the letters already quoted regarding the maintenance of the record in Orissa and in Eastern Bengal it was stated that the question of maintenance need not be considered until the next revision of the record-of-rights in 8 or 10 years' time. Whether the possibility of maintaining the record might not be reconsidered at an earlier date in some of the districts, such as Dacca and Mymensingh, in which the initial record is approaching completion, is a matter which we must leave for the decision of Government. On one point we are quite clear, and that is, that it would be a great mistake to attempt to introduce any scheme of record-maintenance until the Circle System and the other reforms in village life, which have been proposed in the following chapters, have first been introduced.

Difficulties of impending Tenancy Law amendment.

89. Apart altogether from what we have written above there is another very strong reason for recommending a postponement of the question of record-maintenance, namely, that the Tenancy Law of Bengal is at present in a state of great confusion and uncertainty on the vital question of the transferability of occupancy rights. The Hon'ble High Court has addressed the Bengal Government on this subject, and has recommended that legislation should be undertaken at an early date. It is almost certain that it will be found impossible to confine legislation to this one point. A number of corollary problems will be opened out, and the result will probably be that, along with the determination of the question of "free sale," the framework of the Tenancy Act will be substantially altered in the matter of the status of tenants and their various rights and liabilities. If any system of continuous maintenance or periodical revision is to be introduced, it is much better that it should introduced after, and not before, the amendment of the law. This also was the opinion of many of the witnesses who deposed in favour of continuous maintenance.

Maintenance staff and Circle System.

90. In the circumstances we hardly feel called upon to pronounce on the respective merits of periodical revision and continuous maintenance, still less to give our vote in favour of a particular scheme of either kind. From the point of view of bringing the Executive into touch with the people, which is the point of view with which our Committee is primarily concerned, it is obvious that any scheme which involves the utilization of a permanent and resident agency, recruited from among the villagers, has many

advantages over a scheme which relies on a temporary and extraneous agency. This aspect of the case will, we have no doubt, be duly considered when the time comes for taking up this problem. Meanwhile much will have been done by the system of Circle Officers and Village Unions, which we are proposing towards bringing about closer co-operation between the Government and the people, and this consideration has reconciled us in no small measure to a postponement of the question of maintaining or revising the records. Moreover, from what we have seen in other parts of India, we are satisfied that, if it be decided hereafter to maintain the Bengal records, there will be no difficulty in making the necessary additions to the staff of the Circle System, and in working the two branches of the staff as parts of the same organization. For the supervision of the village recorders, the Circle Officer would probably require the assistance of an Assistant Circle Officer and Kanungos; but, as we said before, we refrain from formulating a definite scheme.

Proposals for preparation of Crop Statistics through panchayats.

91. Although we do not recommend the immediate introduction of any scheme of maintenance or periodical revision, we would suggest that, in some of the areas in which the record-of-rights is complete and printed maps are available, an experiment should be made in the direction of improving the preparation of forecasts and crop statistics. To begin with, this operation might be confined to jute, winter rice, and autumn rice—the three most important crops of Bengal. It might be arranged that the Secretary of the Village Union should be a man who understands maps and records, preferably a villager who has been trained in the Settlement Department. We have ascertained that, in the district of Mymensingh alone, there are 2,500 villagers who have received such training. In addition to his other work, the Secretary should be required to go round the fields with a printed map and a blank register showing fields and field areas. He should mark the fields which are under the crop in question, and should prepare an accurate total for the village. A small honorarium might perhaps be paid to the Secretary for this duty, in addition to his other emoluments. The Collector, the Subdivisional Officer, and the Circle Officer would make a point of checking the Secretary's work in the field. We are convinced that such a system would not only bring about a marked improvement in the forecasts and crop statistics of the Province, but it would have the great advantage of giving work to the executive staff, which would make them visit, not only the homesteads, but also the fields of the villagers. We see no reason why this system should not be introduced into the selected areas *pari passu* with the Circle System and the village reforms.

CHAPTER VI.

The Management of Local Affairs in Rural Areas.

Difficulties of administration in Bengal districts

92. The Committee have been asked to consider in what respects the administrative machinery in Bengal districts can be improved, with the special object of bringing the officers of Government into closer touch with the people; and among the means that have been suggested, besides the partition of the larger districts and the opening of new subdivisions, are the development of an improved system of village organization and the creation of a subordinate agency below the Subdivisional Officers, similar to that of Tahsildars in other Provinces. There can be no question that in some districts in Bengal, especially in Eastern Bengal, the Executive Officers of Government do not come into such close contact with the people as elsewhere in India, and are, therefore, less able to secure their sympathy and co-operation in carrying out the administrative policy of Government. This is due to a variety of causes which, we believe, are not always fully understood, and to some of which reference has already been made in earlier chapters of this Report. No one who has had experience of district work in other Provinces, and has been able to compare the conditions prevailing there with those of Eastern Bengal, can fail to be struck by the great difficulties of administration with which officers in the Eastern Bengal districts have to contend. Not only are some of the districts far too large for effective administration, but communications within them are bad, camping in tents is impossible for the greater part of the year, there are very few inspection bungalows, and touring in the interior is not only uncomfortable, exceedingly expensive. Moreover, in the absence of anything in the nature of an organized village system, there is no work going on in the villages which calls for the special attention of District and Subdivisional Officers. The ever-increasing burden of routine and office work tends to keep officers too much at headquarters. Mr. Bonham-Carter, late Commissioner of the Dacca Division, has stated that during the three years in which he held charge of the Mymensingh district, he very seldom left the high road in the course of his tours, and his destination was always a municipality, police-station, or some institution which had to be inspected, so that he was seldom able to visit the villages where no public offices or institutions existed. The Collectors of Bakarganj, Dacca and Mymensingh also testify to the difficulties of touring in their districts, and to the pressure of work which ties them down to their offices and thus prevents them from seeing enough of the villages in the interior. It is the same with Subdivisional Officers, and there is a general complaint that in the Eastern Bengal districts they cannot do as much touring as they should. The use of green-boats, according to Mr. Strong, Collector of Bakarganj, confines touring to certain fixed lines of waterway, and renders it to a large extent

unfruitful. Mr. Spry, Collector of Mymensingh, says that even where, as in Tangail, the Subdivisional Officer has two full-powered officers to assist him, his office work keeps him so much at headquarters that he has time only to make short tours out and back again at week ends. The Collector of Dacca, Mr. Birley, states that in his opinion the want of inspection bungalows is largely responsible for the deficiency of touring in his district, in which camping in tents is impossible for the greater part of the year; and a similar complaint is made by Mr. Woodhead, the Collector of Faridpur. We shall have occasion to refer to this question again later on in our Report, but the provision of a sufficient number of inspection bungalows is a matter of considerable administrative importance in districts where camping in tents is difficult, and we think that it should be taken up by Government and not, as at present, be left entirely in the hands of the District Boards. Several officers have complained of the inadequacy of the rates of travelling allowance in districts in Eastern Bengal, where the charges for carts and boats are exceptionally heavy, and this, we think, is a matter which merits the attention of Government.

Lack of direct relations between Government Officers and the People.

93. In the course of our enquiries we have examined the tour diaries of District and Subdivisional Officers and have seen everywhere the clearest indications that in many districts, especially in Eastern Bengal, systematic touring by officers in the interior of their charges is the exception rather than the rule, and that very little camping in the true sense of the word is done. The result is that, except in Government Estates, or in places where settlement operations or some special work is in progress, the only representatives of Government with whom the people come into contact outside the courts and offices at headquarters, are the thana police, who are neither a popular agency nor a suitable link in the chain between the people and the District Officers. In the United Provinces and the Central Provinces and also in Madras and the Punjab, patwaris or karnams are employed in every village, whose work has to be constantly inspected; and District and Subdivisional Officers make extended tours in the interior of their charges, living in tents and taking case and office work into camp with them. In Bengal, officers seldom try cases, other than bad-livelihood cases, in camp, the explanation usually given being the increasing tendency among parties and their pleaders to raise objections to the hearing of their cases away from headquarters, especially in districts where touring is difficult. We have found also that there is a general impression among officers that it is the policy of Government to discourage the trial of cases in camp, for which some justification may be found in the wording of the orders in Rule 50 on page 40 of the Board's Rules, which suggest that Subdivisional Officers should so arrange their tour programmes as to allow them to spend two or three days in the week at the headquarters of their subdivisions for the disposal of criminal work. In some of the Eastern Bengal districts conditions are unfavourable to the hearing of cases in camp, but the effect of the orders quoted must be to discourage systematic touring in all districts. We think that the orders should be modified, so as to make it clear that, subject to the limitations proposed by the Decentralisation

Commission in paragraph 671 of their report, Government do not wish to discourage the hearing of cases by officers on tour. The partition of the heavier districts and the opening of new subdivisions, which we have proposed in Chapters III and IV, as well as a steady continuance of the policy of appointing Sadar Subdivisional Officers in all districts, and of posting full-powered second officers to subdivisions where work is especially heavy, should go far towards relieving District and Subdivisional officers of the burden of office work, and should enable them to spare more time for regular touring. This, and the development of a village organization under the control of officers living in the interior, who will be directly subordinate to the Subdivisional Officers, and whose work will require constant and careful supervision, should do much to create an interest in the villages, and should help to bring the officers of the district into closer association with the people.

Need for Circle Officers.

94. Another reason which is frequently put forward in explanation of the loss of touch between Government officers and the people is that in Bengal administrative devolution stops at the Subdivisional Officer, below whom, outside Government Estates, there is no subordinate agency other than the police, to act as a means of communication between Government and the villagers. In the United Provinces and in the Central Provinces, Subdivisional Officers have one or more Tahsildars subordinate to them. Each Tahsildar is stationed at his own Tahsil headquarters and controls a staff of kanungos and patwaris working in the villages. In Madras there is a highly organized village agency in each village, working in subordination to the Tahsildars and Divisional Officers and performing many of the functions which, in Bengal, for want of any other agency, have to be entrusted to the police. The usefulness of an agency of this kind, so completely decentralized and so close to the people, is obvious, and for want of it District and Subdivisional Officers in Bengal are at a serious disadvantage. In other Provinces Tahsildars, as their name implies, are primarily agents for the collection of Government revenue; but, as a rule, collection work occupies only a portion of their time, and they are usefully employed by District Officers on many miscellaneous revenue and executive functions. In the permanently-settled area of Bengal, with its centralized and automatic system for the realization of land revenue under the Sunset Law, there is no place for Tahsildars, and some other justification for the creation of any subordinate agency of the kind that exists in other Provinces has to be found. We have discussed in Chapter V of this report, the proposals which have been made from time to time to create a Land Records staff for the continuous maintenance of the records in those districts in which records have been prepared, and we have stated our reasons for the belief that, although it is an object to be kept in view, continuous maintenance in any form would not, for the present at least, be worth the trouble and cost involved. It is true that in the Benares Division of the United Provinces, where also the land revenue demand has been fixed in perpetuity, there are Tahsildars; but the cases are not parallel, for the Sunset Law has never been in force in this division, and collection of revenue has always been conducted there

in the same manner as in the rest of the Province. The procedure of Act XI of 1859 has been accepted by the people, not only in Bengal, but also in Bihar and the temporarily-settled districts of Orissa, and is well suited to the conditions prevailing in these Provinces. There has never been any agitation for a change, and no suggestion of the kind has been made to us by any of the witnesses whom we have examined in the course of this enquiry. Nevertheless, most witnesses agree that in Bengal there is a great need for a subordinate local agency, other than the police, below the Subdivisional Officers, which will serve as a link between the village communities and the district officials, and will be available for carrying out some, at least, of the miscellaneous functions, which are entrusted to Tahsildars in other Provinces. The late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam fully realized the possibilities of such an organization, in connection particularly with the control and development of village panchayats, and the enquiries instituted on the proposals of the Decentralisation Commission for the creation of Circles within the subdivision, and for encouraging the growth of village communities, resulted in the comprehensive scheme which was submitted to Government by the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board of Revenue in Mr. Dixon's letter No. 1131 of the 7th August 1911. The details of that scheme, which was accepted by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and in its general outline was approved by the Government of India, will be discussed more fully later on in this Report. It will be sufficient to state here that it provides for the division of districts into Circles, each Circle being under the charge of a gazetted officer of the status of a Sub-Deputy Collector, who would be subordinate to the Subdivisional Officer, and whose main functions would be the controlling of an organised system of village panchayats in each Circle, exercising the combined functions of the chaukidari panchayats under Act VI of 1870 and of the Union Committees under the Local Self-Government Act, III of 1885. The proposed scheme is one of great administrative importance, for it contemplates the creation, not only of a village organization which it may be possible to utilize as the basis of real local self-government in Bengal, but also of a supervising local agency, without which no village system can ever be expected to work satisfactorily, and which will take the place to some extent of the Tahsildars of other Provinces. The possibility of establishing a local organization on these or on modified lines, and of creating a subordinate civil agency to supervise the work of the village communities and to act as a link between them and the Subdivisional Officer, is one of the main objects to which the enquiries of the Committee have been directed.

Chaukidari Panchayats.

95. The proposals for village administration in Bengal have hitherto related chiefly to the chaukidari panchayats created under Act VI of 1870, and to a less extent to Union Committees constituted under the Local Self-Government Act, III of 1885, as amended by Act V of 1908. The organization of Union Committees has never advanced beyond the experimental stage and only a few are to-day in existence, but chaukidari panchayats have everywhere been established, although they differ

widely from the village communities which still exist in some Provinces in India. There are no village communities in Bengal to-day in the sense in which the term is usually understood and as they are found in Madras, Bombay and in parts of the Central Provinces; for in Bengal the Permanent Settlement and the predominating local influence of the landlords, as well as other contributory causes, such as the spread of education, improved facilities of communication, and the ever-increasing tendency to centralization of control, have combined to destroy all traces of any village system which may have existed in pre-British days. In Bengal and Eastern Bengal, as well as over the greater part of Bihar and Orissa, the chaukidari panchayat system, a purely artificial organization, the first legal recognition of which dates from the passing of Act VI of 1870, has taken its place. The unit of panchayati administration that has been adopted is not the individual village, but a number of villages, grouped into Unions, though not organically united by bonds of communal interest. Nevertheless the arrangement is convenient, as the Unions are not too large for management by local panchayats, and there is the additional advantage that it secures a wider field for the selection of capable members to serve on them. The system has been accepted by the people, and all whom we have consulted agree that, instead of attempting to introduce any radical change, it will be wiser to utilize existing materials, and to concentrate efforts on strengthening and improving them. Hitherto, all attempts to improve the position of the panchayats and to make them useful members of the general administration of the districts have met with little success. The cause is not far to seek. Until very recently the tendency has been to treat the panchayats purely as an agency for the assessment and collection of the chaukidari tax and for the punctual payment of the salaries of the chaukidars, and it is by this standard that the efficiency of otherwise of the panchayat sytem has been judged. For the last thirty years attention has repeatedly been drawn to the difficulty of inducing the most influential men in the village to serve as members of the panchayat, and the reasons ascribed have invariably been the same, namely, the unpopularity attaching to the collection of the tax, the liability of the panchayats to have their goods distrained and sold as the immediate consequence of any default in the payment of the chaukidar's salary, and the constant interference of the police, which, although not contemplated by law, had, in the absence of any other agency, to be employed in order to enforce punctual payment and to see that the panchayats performed the duties required of them by the law. Various measures have been proposed from time to time to remove these objections and to render service on the panchayat more attractive, but the objections still remain and in many districts the post of member of a panchayat is as unpopular as ever it was. The Committee appointed in 1890, under the presidency of Mr. Beames, to consider the reform of the police of the Lower Provinces of Bengal, recommended, as Mr. Monro's Committee had done a few years earlier, that the work of collection of the tax should be taken away from the panchayats and made over to a paid agency under the control of the local officers, and they further proposed that the members of the panchayat should be appointed by a system of formal election, subject to the approval of the District

Magistrate. Both proposals, however, met with strong opposition and were eventually abandoned. The Indian Police Commission of 1902-03 dealt with the subject at some length, and they ascribed the comparative failure of the panchayat system in Bengal partly to the reasons already given, and partly to the lack of interest taken in its working by District Officers throughout the Province. They recommended that an attempt should be made to develop a village system gradually and cautiously through the medium of the existing panchayats, and to extend its usefulness by employing the members of the panchayats, in some measure at least, as headmen are employed in other parts of India, and by making petty criminal cases over to them for disposal.

The President System.

96. As the outcome of these recommendations Mr. Savage was in 1904 placed on special duty, and he introduced what is known as the President panchayat system into certain selected districts of the Province. In the following year, Mr. Wheeler took up the enquiry in succession to Mr. Savage, and compiled a complete Chaukidari Manual for general application throughout the Province as then constituted. Mr. Savage's President system was designed to relieve the leading member of the panchayat, who was known as the President, of all work in connection with the collection of the tax, which was entrusted to a collecting member nominated by the whole panchayat for the purpose, the dignity and status of the President being further enhanced by investing him with powers under sections 64, 127 and 128 of the Criminal Procedure Code to arrest any persons committing an offence in his presence, as well as to order unlawful assemblies to disperse and, if necessary, to summon civil assistance for the purpose. He was also to be entrusted with certain miscellaneous functions, such as the inspection of schools and pounds within the Union, the supervision of the service of processes by dafadars, the conduct of enquiries into unnatural deaths where no suspicion of foul play existed, and the collection of vital and other statistics. He was authorized to correspond direct with the Magistrate, and the chaukidars were required to parade before him at stated intervals, in addition to their regular parades at the thanas. This was an attempt to utilize the panchayats in work not directly connected with chaukidari affairs, and it was a practical recognition of the fact that something more than mere freedom from police control and relief from duties connected with the payment of the chaukidar was necessary to make the post of panchayat attractive. The scheme was a step in the right direction, but it did not go far enough towards giving the President any real power or responsibility; and the initial mistake was made of attempting to introduce it without the special supervision, which both Mr. Savage and Mr. Wheeler, from the first, had strongly insisted on as necessary to its success. The sudden transfer to the President of the control over the chaukidar was resented by the police, and the position was never clearly understood by them, the chaukidars, or the panchayats. The result was that the chaukidars lost efficiency, and the influence of the police in the villages was seriously weakened. The outbreak of unrest closely followed on the introduction of this policy, and it was found in the Eastern Bengal districts that some of the Presidents were actively sympathizing with

the agitation against Government, and certain of their functions, including the holding of parades of chaukidars, had to be retransferred from them to the thana police. Thus, in Eastern Bengal, the whole system was discredited and conditions were not much better in some of the western districts. Interest in the experiment had not been sustained, and, as Mr. Weston remarks in paragraph 6 of his report of the 20th August 1912, although the Presidents were in many cases willing and able, they were groping in the dark, and, in the absence of the supervision which was so essential to the success of the system, their early struggles for more light soon degenerated into the apathy springing from neglect. It was much the same in the districts in which the ordinary panchayat system was in force, and, although here and there an energetic District Officer was able to bring it to a state of mechanical efficiency, as a rule little attention was paid to the subject and the panchayats continued to be regarded solely as an agency for the assessment and collection of the chaukidars' pay.

Reasons for the failure of the Panchayats.

97. The importance of improving the position of the panchayats and making them an useful link in the administration between the people and the District Officers has been repeatedly urged, but it cannot be said that, outside the subdivisions to which special officers have recently been deputed, any sustained advance in this direction has yet been made. At successive Commissioners' conferences in Bengal and in Eastern Bengal and Assam, the question of chaukidari administration has come up as a perennial topic for discussion, but attention has been confined to details, such as the question of the chaukidars' pay and how it can be distributed, the relations of the chaukidars to the panchayats and to the police, the holding of chaukidari parades, the best method of reporting crime at the thanas, etc.; but how far the system as a whole can be brought into closer relation to the needs of village life, and the panchayats be employed as useful units in the administration in other directions than that merely of chaukidari work, has never been systematically taken up and pressed to a solution. Generally, if the chaukidar is paid with fair punctuality and there are no complaints, the situation is accepted as satisfactory, but in many districts the panchayats of to-day are of little more practical use to District Officers or to Government, from an administrative point of view, than they were thirty years ago. Over and over again it has been pointed out that, without at least one whole-time special officer to supervise the work of the panchayats in each district, the President system was bound to fail, but the question has invariably been shelved on some ground or other, and, until the recent deputation of Mr. Weston and Mr. J. N. Gupta to supervise the introduction of an experimental Circle System into certain selected subdivisions, practically nothing was done. It is difficult to persuade the best men in the Union to serve on the panchayat, which is hardly a matter of surprise, seeing that the main duties of the panchayat are still the assessment and collection of a tax levied directly from the people for the support of the chaukidars over whom in practice they exercise no control; while they frequently have distasteful duties thrust upon them, such as the collection of figures for the cattle census and the preparation of the jute forecasts, for which

they receive no remuneration and very little in the way of acknowledgment. We were told in Dacca that, owing to the harassment occasioned by the proceedings in connection with the jute forecasts, several Presidents or collecting members had resigned their appointments, and most of the officers whom we have consulted, and some of the Presidents and collecting members themselves, have borne witness to the unpopularity of these new duties. The panchayats of to-day are bound by stringent obligations, but possess few, if any, privileges, even in the case of Presidents under Mr. Savage's system in the districts in which it has survived unaltered. We have not come across any instances in which the power of arresting offenders or dispersing unlawful assemblies has been exercised, and we doubt whether Presidents derive much satisfaction from the knowledge that they possess these powers. The right to inspect schools and pounds is not a privilege which is likely to be greatly appreciated, unless the panchayats are given some voice in the management and control of these institutions. Enquiries into unnatural deaths and the collection of vital and other statistics are not in themselves particularly attractive duties, and the service of processes through Presidents and dafadars, however convenient to the people, is certain to develope into an irksome and unpleasant task, unless it is carefully supervised by sympathetic officers, anxious that the scheme should be a success, and ready to make allowances for the mistakes that must be expected at the initial stages, and personally to explain how such mistakes can be avoided. Moreover, it is a defect of the system that, although it aims at the improvement of the position of the President, it does nothing for the other members, of whom the collecting member ordinarily accepts the appointment for what it will bring in to him, while the others have no particular duties to perform. In fact, as one officer has stated, the glorification of the President has diminished rather than increased the influence and activity of his colleagues. It has to be recognized that hitherto the scope of the panchayat's functions has been too little related to the needs of the village, and that it is only by utilizing their services in other directions than in purely chaukidari matters, such as, for example, in the disposal of petty civil and criminal cases and in the exercise of truly municipal functions, and by substituting real power and responsibility for what is merely make-believe, that their position is likely to be improved in the eyes of the public, and the best men in the village induced to serve. It is especially in the exercise of municipal functions that village bodies will find their most suitable field for employment, and we are entirely in accord with the view that it is by the amalgamation of the functions of the chaukidari panchayats with those of the Union Committees under the Local Self-Government Act, that the extended usefulness and improvement of the panchayats are most likely to be secured. The proposal is not a new one. The Decentralization Commission were in favour of such a step, and the same suggestion has been made by many officers in the past. The Police Committee of 1890, over which Mr. Beames presided, remarked that it would be manifestly inconvenient to have two such bodies side by side in one village, and Sir Edward Baker, in 1910, expressed the opinion that in localities where

Unions under the Local Self-Government Act existed, it would be preferable to amalgamate the charges of the chaukidari panchayats and Union Committees, entrusting the functions exercised under both Acts to one body. This is one of the main features of the Circle scheme, and the proposal has met with the almost unanimous approval of all whom we have consulted in the course of our present enquiries.

Proposals for Local Self-Government in 1883.

98. The history of Union Committees has many points of resemblance with that of chaukidari panchayats, for in the 28 years since the passing of Act III of 1885, by which Union Committees were first constituted, the question has been under constant discussion, and although the importance of developing the system has repeatedly been emphasized in Government Resolutions and Orders, very little has been done, and the system has still not passed beyond the experimental stage. Historically, Union Committees are the successors of the old Municipal Unions, of which there were 54 in Bengal when Municipal Unions were abolished by the Bengal Municipal Act, III of 1884. It was understood at that time that provision would be made for these Unions in the Bill for the extension of local self-government in Bengal, which was then under consideration, and which afterwards became Act III of 1885. The terms of this Bill, which was first introduced into the Bengal Council in February 1883, will repay careful examination. The professed object of the Bill, according to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, was to give the people of Bengal a substantial interest in, and responsibility for, the administration of their own local affairs, and to provide for the establishment of local self-government on a really sound and practical basis. It was proposed to effect this by establishing Union Committees, each with an area of about 12 square miles, for the management of affairs of immediate interest to the villagers, and Local Boards for the general control of the Union Committees, and for the management of works and institutions of more general importance. The Union Committees were to be elected by the villagers themselves by such simple processes as might be familiar to them, and they were to be entrusted with the management and control of the Primary Schools and pounds of the Union, and of its roads, tanks and drains, as well as the responsibility for general sanitation and for the registration of vital statistics within the areas under their charge. They were also to form an agency for the execution of larger works, under the direction of the Local Boards. The area under a Local Board was to be determined according to local circumstances, and on the following principles. On the one hand the areas should not be so large as to render it impossible for the bulk of the members of the Boards to have some knowledge of, and interest in the tract to be administered, and to prevent them from devoting personal and practical attention to its administration; on the other hand it should be large enough to furnish duties of sufficient importance to interest men of education, and to supply suitable men for the performance of those duties. It was thought that ordinarily the subdivision would best fulfil these conditions, but in backward districts two or more subdivisions might be combined to form a single Board. It was recognized that no system of local self-government would be complete, unless it rested on the basis of election, and provision was

therefore made for the election of a proportion of the members of the Board, where an electoral body could be obtained. It was considered that, where the system of Union Committees existed, an electorate would be found in the members of these Committees, but, where such Committees could not be created, there could be no system of election, as it was thought that any attempt to enlist the interest of the people at large in the administration of so great an area as that to be controlled by Local Boards would be hopeless. It was, therefore, provided in the Bill that, if half the area of any thana was under the jurisdiction of Union Committees, a proportion of the members of the Local Boards representing that thana should be elected by the members of the Committees and by persons of a certain standard of education possessing local interests within the thana. The Local Boards were to have the general control of the Union Committees within their jurisdiction, and to be given power to compel them to do their duty. They were to be entrusted with the powers and duties now exercised by District Boards, and were to be under the general control of a Central Board sitting in Calcutta. Local officers were to have powers to inspect the working of the Boards and to suspend or prohibit any action which might be considered dangerous to the public interests. Provision was made for an annual conference of delegates from the different Boards in a district, for the purpose of fixing the rate of Road cess to be levied.

The Legislation of 1885.

99. The point to be noticed in this connection is that it was the original intention of the framers of the Bill, that Union Committees should form the basis of local self-government in Bengal, and, in anticipation of the passing of the Bill, Mr. E. V. Westmacott was in 1883 placed on special duty to prepare the way for the introduction of the new law by the creation of a net-work of Unions throughout the Province, so that they might be set in operation as soon as the Act was passed. Mr. Westmacott formed 180 Unions in seven subdivisions in the Burdwan and Presidency Divisions and in the Munshiganj subdivision of the Dacca district, the area of each Union being on the average about 20 square miles, and the population about 13,000. Committees were also appointed in all the Unions, after informal elections held under the supervision of the District Officers concerned. Mr. Westmacott's work received the commendation of the Bengal Government in a Resolution of the 31st March 1884, but the passage of the Bill through Council was delayed, owing to objections taken by the Secretary of State, and eventually the whole framework of the original scheme was changed. From the first the Secretary of State had been opposed to the idea of a Central Board, and had insisted on the closer connection of the District Officer with the new scheme of local self-government. He wished to entrust most of the powers of the Central Board to District Committees, under the presidency in most cases, at all events in the first instance, of the District Magistrate. The Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Rivers Thompson, unsuccessfully protested against this suggestion, as in his view the efficient and independent working of the Local Boards would be endangered by the establishment of District Committees, and he therefore proposed to adhere to the Subdivisional Board as the largest ordinary unit of administration,

the necessary control being exercised, within precisely defined limits, by the Commissioner of the Division, working through the Magistrate of the district. These proposals were accepted by the Government of India, but the Secretary of State adhered to his scheme of District Committees, although he had no objection to treating them as committees of control rather than committees of administration. In deference to this view, the Bill was recast and the opinions of local officers were invited. Further changes were made in Select Committee and in the Legislative Council, and on the 4th April 1885 the Bill was finally passed into law as Act III (B.C.) of 1885. By the Act the District Board, under the Chairmanship of the District Officer, became the unit of administration, and not simply a committee of control as the Secretary of State had suggested, the Local Boards were the agents of the District Board with very restricted powers, while Union Committees became merely optional appendages of the superior bodies, having very limited powers of raising funds by local taxation, and then only for specific projects. We doubt whether it was fully realized at the time how completely the changes made at the instance of the Secretary of State had transformed the whole scheme for local self-government in Bengal. There are many to-day who assert that local self-government in these Provinces is a sham, and the remedy they suggest is that District and Local Boards should be given greater freedom from official control and be allowed to elect their own Chairman. We do not think that such a step would, at present, lead towards real local self-government, for it is our belief that whatever measure of success the system has achieved in the past, is due largely to the strength of the Executive of the Boards and to the control exercised by the District Officer. We think that it was a mistake to make the District Board the administrative unit of local self-government, and to leave the smaller bodies dependent on its charity and with no clearly defined position in the general scheme. This was to begin local self-government at the wrong end, for the system ought to start from the bottom and work up, as was originally intended in 1883, rather than from the top and work down. We shall return to this subject later on when discussing the failure of Union Committees in the past and the steps which should be taken in order to make them of some use in the future.

Working of Union Committees.

100. After the passing of Act III of 1885 nothing more was heard of the Union Committees formed by Mr. Westmacott, as the Government of Sir Steuart Bayley was of opinion that, in the altered circumstances of the case, owing to the changes made in the original Bill, it would be inadvisable to create such Committees, until the larger and more important bodies had settled down to their work. In 1889 the possibility of utilizing Union Committees as an agency for the improvement of village sanitation came under notice, but no definite action was taken until the beginning of 1894, when instructions were issued in the Bengal Government Resolution No. 3600 L.S.-G. of the 4th January of that year for the creation of one or two Union Committees in each subdivision in the Presidency, Burdwan, Dacca and Chittagong Divisions. Very little was done, but in 1896-97 the subject was again brought into prominence in connection with the threatened water-famine in Bengal, and the Government

of India were asked to sanction a scheme of legislation on the lines of the Central Provinces Sanitation Act, by which Union Committees would be enabled to levy certain local rates for expenditure on sanitation, water-supply and other works of village improvement. The Government of India were not sympathetic; attention was diverted from the subject by the famine of the following year, and the matter was again allowed to drop. It continued to be fitfully noticed in successive annual reports on the working of District Boards in Bengal until, in 1904, the proposal to legislate on the lines of the Central Provinces Sanitation Act, which had been amended two years previously, was renewed. There were then 58 Union Committees in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, with areas varying from 1¼ to 50 square miles and population from 4,004 to 85,555. Their aggregate expenditure for the preceding year was approximately Rs. 18,000, practically the whole of which had been granted by the District Boards. The Committees were admittedly of very little use; they had done nothing to improve village sanitation, and they had only succeeded in raising Rs. 339 by local contributions since they were first created. By the passing of Act V of 1908 wider powers were entrusted to Union Committees in matters of water-supply, drainage and conservancy, and they were also empowered to levy taxes on owners and occupiers of property within the Unions in order to meet any deficiency in the cost of carrying out such works. Very little advantage, however, has been taken of these enlarged powers, and of the 61 Union Committees in existence in 1913 in the Province, as at present constituted, few are doing any useful work. The Government Resolution on the working of District and Local Boards in Bengal in 1912-13 condemns them with faint praise. The total expenditure of the Unions during the year amounted to only Rs. 35,485, of which the District Boards contributed Rs. 31,412, and only Rs. 3,685 were realized by local taxation under section 118C. Of the 61 Unions, 50 never realized anything at all under this section. The closing balance of all the Union funds taken together at the end of the year was over Rs. 14,000.

Reasons for their failure.

101. Various reasons have been given for the failure of Union Committees. It is said they are a fifth wheel to the coach, that they overlap other agencies, such as the chaukidari panchayats and School and Dispensary Committees, that there was never any particular duty which it was incumbent on them to perform, and that everything, including the power to raise money by local taxation, has been left entirely to their own discretion, with the result that very little has been done. Here and there Union Committees have shown their capacity for doing useful work, but, as a rule, for want of any agency to control and advise them, the Committees lack initiative, and District Boards have hitherto been averse from making liberal grants of money, the expenditure of which they were not in a position to supervise, while they believed it could be more usefully employed by themselves or the Local Boards in other ways. Moreover there has never been any clearly defined policy in regard to these Committees, nor has any sustained effort been made to carry through schemes for their improvement. Time has been wasted in elaborating and considering them, and different views have been held by successive Lieutenant-Governors, with the result that after 25 years of discussion

and voluminous writing, scarcely any advance has been made. All this, no doubt, partially accounts for the failure of Union Committees, but we think that one of the chief reasons is to be found in the changes made in the original Local Self-Government Bill of 1883. Under the Bill the Union Committees had a definite place in the scheme of local self-government, but when the District Board displaced the Local Boards as the superior administrative body and the latter became its agents, there was no room left for a further agency which could only be financed at the expense of the Local Boards. As it is, Local Boards have little enough to do, and they find it hard to justify their existence, as nearly every Annual Administration Report for the last 20 years bears witness. To be merely a controlling body, allotting funds and supervising the work of the Union Committees, would not satisfy the Local Boards. They are not a suitable controlling agency, for the area of their jurisdiction is too large and they are composed largely of members who have neither knowledge nor interest in village works. The continuance of Local Boards on their present basis is inconsistent with the extension on a large scale of Union Committees financed by the District Board, for the more Committees there are, the less reason will there be for the existence of the Local Boards, except as supervising agencies, a function for which, as now constituted, they are unsuited.

Powers of Government in respect of Unions in Madras.

102. It is true that in the Madras Presidency there are Union Panchayats, playing an important part in the local self-government scheme, and, as we have seen for ourselves, doing much useful work under the supervision of the Taluk Boards and Tahsildars. Their position, however, is very different from that of the Union Committees in Bengal. Under section 6 of the Madras Local Boards Act, V of 1884, the Governor in Council has power to declare one or more villages or parts of villages to be an Union, and section 57 authorizes the levy of certain taxes within an Union, when once it has been constituted, including a house tax under sub-clause (*iii*) of the same section. fees for licenses granted for the temporary erection of pandals and other structures in public places [sub-clause (*v*)], and fees for the putting up of any verandah, balcony, sunshade, weather-frame or the like to project over the road in front of any building or land [sub-clause (*vi*)]. Under section 58 the District Board has power to determine whether any of these taxes or fees should be levied within the Union, and, if so, at what rates within the maxima prescribed, and the Taluk Board has similar power as regards fees leviable under sub-clauses (*v*) and (*vi*) of section 57. The Governor in Council is empowered under section 59 to direct the levy of any of the above taxes or fees within an Union, unless the District Board can show good cause to the contrary. The headman of each revenue village or portion of a village comprised in the Union is, *ex-officio*, a member of the panchayat, and the other members are either appointed by the Divisional Officer as *ex-officio* President of the Taluk Board, under authority vested in him by the Governor in Council, or are partly appointed and partly elected as the Government may decide. The system of election was introduced for the first time in 1912-13 into certain Unions in all the Madras districts, with the exception of three. There were 393 Unions in the Presidency last year, and their total expenditure

amounted to nearly $9\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs, of which over $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs represent expenditure on conservancy, scavenging and other sanitary measures, and over $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs on street lighting. They received only Rs. 64,000 in grants from the District and Taluk Boards, while they realized Rs. 86,347 from fees and fines, and over $7\frac{3}{4}$ lakhs from the house-tax. Generally only the smaller towns and large villages are formed into Unions, which are virtually petty self-contained municipalities, raising the bulk of their funds by local taxation, and thus rendering themselves, practically speaking, financially independent of the District and Taluk Boards. The panchayats have no voice in deciding what taxes shall be levied and at what rates, and the duties of the Chairman are merely to assess and collect the tax, after its imposition has been ordered by the District or Taluk Board. In Bengal, Union Committees, unless they tax themselves, are dependent on the liberality of the superior Boards for their very existence, and the restrictions imposed by section 118 C of the Local Self-Government Act seem, if anything, to imply discouragement of local taxation.

Position of Union Committee in Bengal.

103. In the Bengal Government Circular No. 38 L.S.-G., dated the 15th August 1910, local officers were enjoined to encourage the formation of Unions in the larger villages, and it was explained that "the class of village contemplated is the large bazar, which is not of sufficient importance to be made into a municipality, but in which the need of sanitation, etc., is felt, and where there is a fair level of intelligence among the inhabitants." The District Boards were to be "invited to place sufficient funds at the disposal of the Committee to justify their existence, and to enable them, if they wish, to execute works of some value to the locality." It was added "the power of permissive taxation will require to be exercised with caution; but it has already been conferred by the law, and there are probably cases in which it can be made use of with advantage." These orders, too, can only be construed as a discouragement of self-taxation, and they emphasize the distinction between the Union Committees in Bengal and the Unions in Madras, which are almost entirely self-supporting. In Bengal, the initiation of self-taxation is left to the Union Committees, and the law provides no means of compelling them to use their powers under section 118 C; in Madras, the Union Panchayats have no voice in the matter, and the decision to impose taxation within the Unions rests with the District and Taluk Boards and ultimately with the Government. It is an objection to the system followed in Bengal that it only takes into account the smaller towns and large villages. Even as regards these, the resources of the District Boards have not hitherto been sufficient to enable them to show any great liberality to the Committees, and, if they had attempted to do so on the lines proposed by the Government of Bengal, it could only have been at the expense of the rural areas. The extension of Union Committees on the lines of the similar Committees in Madras is only possible, if the Committees are encouraged to tax themselves under the powers given to them by the law. Even then there is not the same chance of success as in Madras, for in Bengal Subdivisional Officers have not the time to spare for the supervision of the work of Committees on an extensive scale, and they have no subordinate agency like the Tahsildars in Madras to help them.

The provision of pure drinking water in rural areas, the improvement of village sanitation and the adoption of measures to combat the prevalence of malaria are among the most pressing needs of the Presidency to-day and have attracted the anxious attention of Government in recent years. The possibility of utilizing the services of Union Committees in helping forward schemes of sanitary improvement has repeatedly been recognized, and some of the ways in which the Committees may be usefully employed are mentioned in the Bengal Government Resolution No. 1518 L.S.-G., dated the 11th November 1912, reviewing the proceedings of the Conference held in Darjeeling on the 9th and 10th October 1912, to consider the question of improving the drinking-water supply in rural areas. Hitherto, for reasons already given, very little use has been made of Union Committees, although here and there a few Committees have succeeded in raising small amounts by local taxation under section 118 C. But, as Government have observed in the Resolution just quoted, spasmodic efforts are of little avail, and real progress can only be made by continuous and sustained effort. We are convinced that it is only in the wholesale extension of the system of Union Committees under close and careful supervision, and in the proper use by them of the powers which the law gives them, not in the multiplication of departmental agencies, such as Sanitary Inspectors and the like, that any real progress is possible.

Financing of Union Committees.

104. The transfer of the Public Works cess to District Boards provides the means of financing Union Committees, and removes one of the chief difficulties in the way of their more extended use that have been experienced in the past. It has been suggested to us that two-thirds, or some other proportion of the Public Works cess, might be distributed among all the combined chaukidari and local self-government Unions in a district, thus giving each Union from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400 annually, a sum sufficiently large to effect some appreciable improvement. We have no doubt that, if this or a similar suggestion for financing Union Committees is adopted, there will be found many Committees in every district who, under the guidance of sympathetic officers, will be ready to utilize the powers given to them by section 115 and the following sections of the Local Self-Government Act III of 1885, and to supplement their resources by local assessments made by themselves under section 118C. It may be necessary eventually to amend the Act on the lines of the Madras Local Boards Act, so as to give the Government authority, should occasion arise, to compel Union Committees to exercise the powers conferred on them by the law, but we are unwilling to recommend this course at present, as hitherto the existing system has not been given a real chance. The exercise of the important functions of Union Committees under sections 116 and 118 depends on rules made by the Local Government; but so far no rules have been framed. We have found that, even where Union Committees exist, there is often a good deal of ignorance among the members as to their powers and duties under the Act, for it has been nobody's particular concern to explain to them what their powers and duties are, to get them to consider what might be done to improve village sanitation and water-supply, or to show them how to set about it. Mr. Moberly, speaking of the

Union Committees established in the Burdwan District, says that as a rule the public have taken little interest in them, and that many who live in the Unions are not even aware that the Committees exist. Mr. Milne, Collector of Murshidabad, told us that, until quite recently, the members of the five Union Committees in his district had no idea of their powers, or even that they might raise money by local taxation, and that they are now making assessments under section 118 C for works of village improvement. There is ample material available, although hitherto advantage has not been taken of it.

Circle Boards.

105. The system, no doubt, is chiefly to blame. There is a considerable body of opinion that Local Boards are not effective agents of the District Board, and have failed to justify their existence, while most of the witnesses, whom we have examined on the point, agree that the thana or Circle under the Circle scheme would be a more suitable unit for the Local Board than the subdivision. It would be a more effective arrangement if, in place of the present Local Boards, Circle Boards were created, the members of which would represent the tax-payers of the Unions, while their functions would be mainly those of a controlling agency, the executive duties of the present Local Boards being transferred as far as possible to the Union Committees. The existence of such Boards in the interior of the district, each representing an area considerably smaller than the subdivision, should be of great use in directions other than that of local self-government, as for example in relieving distress in times of flood or famine, in helping on schemes in connection with the co-operative credit movement and the development of agricultural demonstration, and in advising District Officers with regard to certain local and administrative problems. Given the necessary supervising agency, we see no reason why it should not be possible to build up a system of improved local self-government, using the combined Chaukidari Panchayats and Union Committees as the foundation of the whole structure, and working up through the smaller Local or Circle Boards, representing the Unions in each Circle, to a really representative District Board. We shall refer again to this question in the following chapter, when we come to deal with the details of the scheme, but the possibility of creating a local self-government organization on these lines is one of the most attractive developments of the Circle System.

Position of the Village Watch.

106. Before examining the specific proposals that have been made for the introduction of the Circle System into selected Bengal districts, it is necessary to consider what should be the position of the village watch in their relations to the panchayats on the one hand and to the regular police on the other, and how their pay should be met; for on the decision of these questions must largely depend the nature of the duties and responsibilities to be assigned to the panchayats in any improved system of village organization which is based on the assumption by the existing chaukidari panchayats of the functions of the Union Committees under the Local Self-Government Act. The question of the nature of the control which should be exercised over the village watch is one on which there has always been a great conflict of opinion in

Bengal, for while some would consider the chaukidars essentially village servants as in Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces, others would like to see them placed in greater subordination to the regular police, only the assessment and collection of the chaukidari tax being left in the hands of the panchayats. Others, again, would prefer that the chaukidars should be paid from provincial revenues, being made directly subordinate to the regular police and entirely emancipated from village influences. The policy of dual control, which has hitherto been adopted in Bengal, is in the nature of a compromise between the two extreme views, but the extent of the control exercised over the chaukidars by the panchayats and the police, respectively, has varied at different times and in different places. It is unnecessary for us to dwell at any length on the early history of this question. The theory that the village watch is a municipal institution was definitely adopted after much controversy in 1870, and Act VI of that year is based on the assumption that the chaukidar is purely a village servant, employed for the protection of the lives and property of the villagers and looking to the village community for the regular payment of the remuneration to which he is entitled. His chief duties under the Act, as they had been under Regulation XX of 1817, were to give prompt information to the police of all criminal attempts or occurrences in the village, as well as of the movements of bad characters, and to arrest proclaimed offenders or persons taken in the act. He was also bound to assist the panchayat in the collection of the chaukidari tax. Watch and ward occupied a position of secondary importance. At first the appointment, punishment and dismissal of the chaukidars were left in the hands of the panchayats, but the tendency of later legislation was in the direction of strengthening the control of the Magistrate and police over the panchayats and the chaukidars; and, under Act I of 1892, the power of appointing, punishing and dismissing chaukidars, as well as of determining their numbers and fixing their salaries has been vested in the District Magistrate, who, with the sanction of the Commissioner, can delegate this power to any Subdivisional Magistrate or Magistrate of the first class, or to the District Superintendent of Police. In practice, the power of fining chaukidars and of appointing and dismissing them, subject to the Magistrate's approval, has in most districts been delegated to the District Superintendent of Police, who alone, as a rule, exercises these powers in Sadar subdivisions, while in outlying subdivisions the Subdivisional Officers and the District Superintendent of Police have concurrent jurisdiction. The municipal theory, however, although for the most part ignored, has never been abandoned, but, owing to the weakness of the panchayats and the absence of any agency other than the police to see that the panchayats do their duty, it is natural that the chaukidar should have come to be regarded more and more as a police servant. The Indian Police Commission of 1902-03 deplored the increasing tendency to departmentalize the rural police; and the President system, introduced by Mr. Savage two years later, was designed with the object of freeing the panchayats from police influence and of emphasizing the essential character of the chaukidar as a village servant, while leaving him subject to the control of the Magistrate and the police in regard to his police duties. The success of the system depended on the willing

co-operation of the panchayats, and it failed because the necessary supervision was never forthcoming. For the next few years the Annual Reports on the working of the police in Bengal and in Eastern Bengal and Assam contain references to the injurious effects of the system on police administration, especially in the eastern districts; and many officers complained that it had merely transferred the control over the chaukidars from one authority to another less capable of exercising it, with a very distinct loss of knowledge and efficiency on the part of the police.

Control of the Village Watch by Panchayats.

107. We need not follow the different steps that have since been taken from time to time to restore police influence in the villages and to secure closer control over the work of the panchayats and chaukidars. The system of dual control has been accepted by the great majority of the witnesses, both official and non-official, whom we have examined, but there are a few, such as Mr. Geake, Commissioner of the Chittagong Division, and Mr. Bonham-Carter, late Inspector-General of Police in Eastern Bengal and Assam, who would altogether dissociate the chaukidars from the panchayats and place them entirely under the control of the police, the activities of the panchayats being confined to matters connected with the general administration and, in particular, local self-government, all purely police matters being excluded. In the opinion of Mr. Hughes-Buller, the Inspector-General of Police, it is only a question of time before chaukidars are departmentalized, and he thinks that some areas, such as the Bikrampur pargana and parts of the Kishorganj Subdivision, are even now ripe for the change; but he recognizes that, if the chaukidars are removed entirely from the control of the panchayats, they must be paid by Government. Some witnesses have advocated the payment of the chaukidars from Provincial revenues, the proceeds of the present chaukidari tax being diverted to purely village purposes, such as sanitation and the improvement of communications and water-supply. The proposal is an attractive one, but, in the present state of provincial finances, it is unlikely that it would be seriously entertained. The cost of the rural police force in Bengal amounts to approximately 60 lakhs of rupees annually, or nearly as much as the total of the Road and Public Works cess combined; and it is certain that, if the tax were abolished and the responsibility for the payment of the chaukidars assumed by Government, there would be an immediate agitation for an all-round enhancement of the rates of pay, which are admittedly low everywhere and in some places inadequate. It would be unwise to abolish the only existing form of local rating, especially as it has been accepted by the people and there is no agitation for its abolition, and any attempt to replace it by any other corresponding impost for a different purpose would, it is certain, be very difficult to carry through. The unpopularity of the chaukidari tax is often referred to by those who advocate its abolition, but we believe that the charge is somewhat exaggerated and is based mainly on the unfairness and unevenness of the assessment, and possibly on the harsh and unauthorized methods of recovery sometimes adopted by the collecting members and chaukidars. The remedy lies in closer supervision, and, under the Circle scheme, it should be possible for

the Circle Officers to exercise a careful check over the assessments, as well as over the work of collection, and to reduce malpractices to a minimum. Moreover, the chaukidari tax has the great advantage of being assessed and collected by the people themselves without any intervention on the part of Government, while its elasticity renders it easily adaptable to self-taxation in order to meet the requirements of the village in other directions, such as the improvement of sanitation, communications and water-supply. If the tax be continued on its present basis, the panchayats must retain some measure of control over the chaukidars, but in any case, and apart from this consideration, the practical objections to departmentalizing the rural police are as strong to-day as they were when the proposal was so vigorously condemned by the Indian Police Commission in 1903. The Government of India and the Government of Bengal, as well as the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, have on this point expressed their entire concurrence with the views of the Commission which have been adopted by other Provinces also. There are some who contend that the system of dual control over the chaukidars has failed in Bengal, and that it is useless to continue it, but this, to whatever extent it may be true, is due to the weakness and inefficiency of the panchayats and to the absence of any real effort in the past to improve their position and secure their co-operation, which is so essential to effective police work in the villages. Reform should begin with the panchayats, and we think that it would be unwise, now that it is proposed to make a real effort through the Circle scheme to introduce an improved system of village administration, to do anything at the outset which would be likely to weaken the tie between the rural police and the community whom they serve. At the same time we recognize that it would be dangerous if anything were done to render police action in the villages less effective, especially in the Eastern Bengal districts, and to deprive the police of the assistance of the chaukidars. The late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam recognized the danger, and, while they proposed to place the panchayats and chaukidars under the control of the Magistrates, exercised through the Circle Officers, their scheme provided for the maintenance of police control, by allowing the police to have a voice in the appointment of the chaukidars, by continuing the ordinary and pay parades of chaukidars at the thanas, and by making the dafadar a police officer and placing him entirely under the Superintendent of Police. Later on, when the position of the Circle Officer is firmly established and the police are relieved of the non-police functions which they are now called upon to perform with the help of the chaukidars, it should be possible to reduce the number of thana parades of the chaukidars, and perhaps even to abolish them altogether. The advance in this direction should, however, be cautious and the change should not be made until the position of the Circle Officer has been definitely established and is clearly understood by all concerned.

Duties of Chaukidars.

108. Closely connected with the question of the control to be exercised over the chaukidar is that of the sufficiency of his pay,

and this again must largely depend upon the nature of the services, which, under any improved system of village administration, he is to be called upon to perform in his dual capacity as servant of Government and of the village community by whom he is paid. There is a general feeling that in Bengal the chaukidar is underpaid, but there has been an increasing tendency of late to treat him as a whole-time servant, or at any rate to impose upon him duties which only a whole-time servant can possibly be expected to perform. In no other Province that we have visited have we found anything to compare with the elaborate system of combined night patrols of the chaukidars of different villages, which energetic Police Officers are attempting to organise in some districts in Bengal. The interesting report of Mr. E. G. Hart, Superintendent of Police, who was placed on special duty last year under the Inspector-General of Police in connection with certain chaukidari matters, shows how useless it is to attempt to enforce such patrols under the Tangail system or any other of those which he describes, all of which depend on a degree of co-operation on the part of the villagers, which it is clearly hopeless to expect. The verification of the entries in the chaukidars' night patrol books by the signatures of leading villagers will generally be a meaningless formality. As Mr. Gupta observes, it is no check at all and may even serve to screen the chaukidar if he neglects to perform his duties. The experience of Mr. Hart at Tangail, where he found a patrol book written up some days ahead, and where several members of the panchayats admitted to him that they always signed the books, whether or not the chaukidars went on their rounds, as they did not wish to get them into trouble, is typical of what may be expected. The elaborate arrangements described by Mr. Hart for enforcing these night patrols have admittedly failed, and the only remedy suggested is further elaboration, which would entail a further strengthening of the regular police. The report has confirmed our conviction that police control of police duties within the village is impossible. There is a strong body of opinion that the difficulties in the way of enforcing these elaborate night patrols are practically insuperable, and that it is not worth while making the attempt. It is not surprising that the attempts already made in some districts have led to the resignation of a large number of chaukidars, and that it is increasingly difficult to fill the vacancies. In other Provinces there is the same general complaint heard as in Bengal, that chaukidars do not go on their rounds regularly at nights, but even in the Provinces where the chaukidars are paid from general revenues, it is recognized that the matter is one which chiefly concerns the village community, who alone are in a position to enforce the performance of the duty if they wish to do so. The chaukidars are expected to assist Police Officers visiting their villages and to accompany the beat constables on their night rounds within the limits of their jurisdictions, and they do so as a matter of course; but, as Mr. Hart himself notes, the organizing of patrols of chaukidars and the supervision of their work in regard to such matters as the keeping of watch and ward in the villages are not in other Provinces considered to be the duties of the police, who only report against the chaukidar for misconduct in police cases which come to their notice. We are far from suggesting that night patrols

by chaukidars should be abolished or discouraged, especially in localities where there is considerable organized crime and the regular police force is numerically weak ; but we think that it is only by increasing the efficiency of the panchayats and securing their co-operation through the medium of the Circle Officer, that any real improvement in the execution of their duties of watch and ward by chaukidars can be expected. It is our experience that where the village community is strongest the duty of watch and ward is most effectually performed.

Relations of Police and Chaukidars.

109. The Collectors of the districts of the Dacca Division, at a Conference held on the 4th March last, agreed that there was no case for making the chaukidar a whole-time servant, that the duty of enforcing night rounds rests primarily with the panchayats, and that the police should not interfere in these matters without the approval of the District Magistrate. In Bengal the Legislature has deliberately decided that in matters of watch and ward the chaukidars are to be subject to the orders of the panchayats, a provision which, we fear, is frequently overlooked. and we think that it is time for the position to be more clearly defined in this respect, for it is interpreted in different ways in different places. In some districts we have seen that chaukidars are constantly fined, on the recommendation of the thana officers, for failure to perform night patrol duties, which have never been prescribed by the only authority legally competent to prescribe them, or for the supposed offence of being found asleep when an officer chances to visit the village at night. It not infrequently happens that, if a petty theft or attempt at burglary is committed in a village at any hour of the night and no trace of the offender is found, the chaukidar is made the scape-goat, and he is reported to and fined by the Superintendent of Police, as a matter of course, for failure to do his night rounds. This is by no means the case everywhere ; and in some districts Superintendents of Police are careful to test the reports of thana officers before passing orders of punishment. Indiscriminate fining of chaukidars for the supposed breach of duties, which it is in any case impossible to enforce, cannot but have a demoralizing effect on the force as a whole, and it is not resorted to in other Provinces. The question is important, for it is no doubt partly because of the tendency to treat the chaukidar more and more as a whole-time servant of Government, that the necessity of increasing his pay has been so strongly urged by many officers. Mr. Hart's report illustrates this tendency. He advocates a substantial all-round increase in the pay of the chaukidars, on the ground that the present rates of pay were fixed so long ago as 1870, when far less was expected of the chaukidars and prices were much lower than they are now, and he goes on to say that if, as he proposes, a higher standard of efficiency, intelligence and physical endurance is demanded, the increase is absolutely essential, and without it we shall accomplish nothing. Mr. Hart's proposals are summarized in paragraph 19 of his report. The remedy he suggests is to give the chaukidar such pay as will justify the police in demanding the whole of his service when occasion calls for it, in fact to give him the pay of a whole-time servant. At

the Calcutta Conference of the 7th April 1913, it was agreed that no hard-and-fast rule regarding the rate at which the chaukidar should be paid could be laid down, but that it was expected that the panchayat would help in supervising the night duties of the chaukidar, and it was to justify a more rigorous exaction of this duty that it was proposed to raise his pay. No doubt an increase of his pay would give the police a stronger hold over the chaukidar, but we think that the matter should not be looked at solely from the police point of view. The question is a much wider one, and should be treated as a part of the larger scheme of improved village administration which it is the ultimate aim of the Circle System to introduce. There are at present 85,042 dafadars and chaukidars in Bengal, and an enhancement of only Re. 1 a month in their pay would mean an increase of over ten lakhs of rupees in the total annual assessment of the tax throughout the Province. It is evident, therefore, that a substantial all-round increase in the chaukidar's pay is a serious consideration; and this, unless it be accompanied by a considerable reduction in the numbers of the chaukidars, which is hardly possible if so much is to be expected from them, can only be secured at the expense of those schemes of village improvement which, with the Circle Officers to guide them, the Union panchayats will be expected to carry out under the powers given to them by section 118C of the Local Self-Government Act.

Remuneration of Chaukidars.

110. The limits of the chaukidar's pay were fixed by Act VI of 1870 at from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 per mensem, and it could hardly have been contemplated, when the Act was passed, that he should be anything but a part-time servant, resident in the village and supplementing his pay by labour and cultivation. By Act I of 1892 the minimum limit was reduced to Rs. 2. For some time after the passing of Act VI of 1870 the pay of the majority of the chaukidars in Bengal was only Rs. 3 per mensem, but it has since been gradually increased. Writing in 1906 Mr. Wheeler remarked that the tendency was to level up the pay of the chaukidars in Bengal to Rs. 5 and of dafadars to Rs. 6, and that, speaking generally, the inadequacy of the chaukidar's pay was then no longer the crying grievance which it once had been. Now the pay of all chaukidars in Bengal has been increased at least to Rs. 5, and in some places to the legal maximum of Rs. 6, which is also the pay of dafadars in all districts. In no other Province are the village watch treated as whole-time servants. In the United Provinces they are paid Rs. 3 per mensem, out of which they have to provide their own uniforms. In the Central Provinces, the kotwars collect their own remuneration, which is, as a rule, equivalent to not less than Rs. 4 per mensem. In Madras, the pay of the talayaris has been fixed by Government at Rs. 4 per mensem, and in other Provinces the rates of pay of the village watch are equally low. We have no doubt that a further increase in the pay of chaukidars and dafadars is necessary in some districts in Bengal, but it is impossible to generalize, and we think that it must be left to the District Officer to say what increase, if any, is required in each case, after considering the local conditions, the nature of the chaukidars' duties and the possibility of a reduction in their numbers. It is very desirable to avoid, as far as possible,

associating the introduction of the large measure of reform, which the Circle System contemplates, with any considerable increase of local taxation, especially for a purpose which is certain to be unpopular; and this is a matter to be borne in mind, when any proposals for increasing the pay of the chaukidars are considered. In Bakarganj, where the post of chaukidar is much sought after and there are numbers of applicants for every vacancy, there is at present, in the District Magistrate's opinion, no necessity to raise the pay of the chaukidars at all. In Faridpur, the District Magistrate, Mr. Woodhead, would like to raise the pay to Rs. 9, and he thinks that, on the assumption that the chaukidar is not to be a whole-time servant of Government and is to be allowed to retain his ordinary village occupations, he can arrange for the increase of pay by a reduction in the number of the chaukidars without any considerable increase in the assessment. Mr. Spry, the District Magistrate of Mymensingh, wishes to increase the pay of the chaukidars in his district to Rs. 7, and he apprehends no difficulty in arranging for this and for a still further increase if it is required. Mr. Rankin, District Magistrate of Tippera, would increase the pay of the Chaukidars in the Tippera district to Rs. 6, and he, too, thinks that some reduction in numbers is possible. Mr. Birley, the District Magistrate of Dacca, would raise the pay of the chaukidars in certain areas of his district, but not in others, and he thinks that there is ample scope for expansion in the present assessment lists. There is a consensus of opinion that the present legal maximum of Rs. 6 in the pay of the chaukidars is too low, and we think that it should be raised to Rs. 12, as agreed to by the majority of members at the Conference of Commissioners held at Darjeeling on the 2nd October 1913. We see no reason for raising the minimum to Rs. 6, as some of the members of the Conference proposed, or indeed for having any minimum at all. The proposal to treat the dafadars as whole-time servants of the police will necessitate a substantial increase in their pay, and we agree with the decision of the Conference that some portion of the increase should be borne by Government.

How an increase in the pay of the Chaukidars is to be met.

111. It remains to be considered how any increased demand on the Union chaukidari fund, consequent on the increase in the rate of pay of the chaukidars and dafadars, is to be met, and whether, if legislation is necessary, it will be sufficient to raise the maximum limit of taxation, which is now Rs. 12 a year, or whether the basis of taxation should be widened, so as to extend the liability to the tax to certain classes who are at present exempt. The question was discussed by Mr. J. N. Gupta in his memorandum of the 4th September 1913, which was considered at the Conference of Commissioners held at Darjeeling on the 2nd October 1913, and we agree with the Conference that the present limit of Rs. 12 a year, prescribed by section 15 of Act VI of 1870, is unsuitable. The limit was fixed when the village, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, was the unit of chaukidari administration, but, with the creation of Unions consisting of several villages or mauzas, the limit is manifestly too low. The Conference were divided as to what the maximum limit should be, and the majority accepted Mr. Gupta's proposal that it should be fixed at Rs. 24 per annum for assessable property in a single village

of the Union, and Rs. 36 for property in more than one village, subject to a further provision that in special cases, like those of lessees of fairs or markets, the limit should be raised to Rs. 60 per annum. We should prefer that there should be no maximum limit at all, but we recognize that the proposal to abolish a maximum would be strongly opposed. We are of opinion that the differential rates proposed by Mr. Gupta are unnecessary. It has been suggested that the maximum limit should be equivalent to the pay of a single chaukidar, and the suggestion deserves consideration. Should, however, it be decided to adopt a fixed maximum, we think that it should be Rs. 36 per annum. It is impossibe, without a careful examination of the circumstances of each district, to estimate, even approximately, what the increased demand on the chaukidari funds will be. It will vary in different districts and in some cases in different Unions in the same district, but we do not think that, if the considerations that we have urged in the preceding paragraph are taken into account, the average increase will be anything like the 70 per cent. which Mr. Gupta suggests, or even half of that amount. After a careful examination of a large number of assessment lists, Mr. Gupta calculates that, by a general revision of existing lists and the adoption of a stricter standard of assessment, an enhancement of 30 per cent. over the amount which is at present collected could be secured without hardship to the tax-payers. This is borne out by our own enquiries, for, in the opinion of most officers whom we have consulted, there should be no difficulty, without any amendment of the law, in increasing the assessment by at least 25 per cent. in most districts and by a great deal more in some, if it were required. There is a general complaint that the chaukidari tax is very unevenly assessed, and that the assessments favour the rich at the expense of the poor. We have seen that it seldom happens that the low maximum of Rs. 12 a year is reached, even in the case of assessees who can well afford to pay treble that amount. Mr. Gupta states that a strict revision of the assessment lists by the special officers working under him has resulted in the exemption of from 30 to 50 per cent. of the poorer residents in most Unions, and that quite 50 per cent. of these exempted persons are easily able to pay a tax of Rs. 6 a year. He adds that by increasing the maximum limit of the tax from Rs. 12 as at present to Rs. 24 a year, it would be possible to increase the fund by about 15 per cent. throughout the Province. The circumstances will, of course, vary in different districts, but we think that there can be no question that there is room everywhere for very considerable expansion in the assessments, even under present conditions, and that if the maximum limit is raised and brought into effective use, as we propose, there should be no necessity for any wide extension of the basis of taxation. We desire, however, to repeat the note of warning that we have already sounded, that the ability of the village to meet the increased expenditure on account of any increase in the pay of the chaukidars is not the sole consideration. No doubt more money can be raised for this purpose, but it should not be at the expense of works of local improvement, which are not only most necessary in themselves, but are needed to give vitality to the panchayats, on whose activity and co-operation any hope of increased efficiency in the village watch must largely depend.

Responsibility of the Zamindars.

112. The proposal to widen the basis of chaukidari taxation was considered by the Calcutta Conference on the 7th August 1913 and also by the Conference of Commissioners held at Darjeeling on the 2nd October 1913. At the former Conference the question was raised whether, in return for the relief from their responsibilities from police duties which they had received under the terms of the Permanent Settlement, the zamindars should not be called upon to contribute to a greater extent than they do at present towards the maintenance of the village watch. The question is closely connected with that of the responsibility of zamindars and landholders for the maintenance of law and order, and one of the questions which the Committee have been asked to consider is whether it will be possible to re-establish such responsibility in Bengal, and, if so, on what lines. The arguments for and against the proposal were discussed by Mr. Gupta in a note of the 24th April 1913. Briefly, the position is that by Regulation XXII of 1793, for reasons which are given in the preamble of that Regulation and on page 53 of the Fifth Report of the Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, the police administration of the country, which up to that time had been left in the hands of the zamindars, was taken away from them and placed directly under Government. The village watchmen, the majority of whom in the western districts were maintained by grants of service lands, were declared to be subject to the orders of the newly-appointed police darogas. The effect of these orders, according to Mr. D. J. McNeile, I.C.S., who was placed on special duty in 1865 to enquire into the working of the rural police in Bengal, was that the State acquired a direct lien upon the *chakran* lands held by the village watchmen, to the extent represented by the public service due from the occupants, the zamindars being left in possession of a lien proportionate to the private service still owing to them by the same occupants. Mr. McNeile's conclusions were that the village watch, so far as their public services were concerned, were, and always have been, entertained solely at the expense of the State, though in other matters they remained the private servants of the zamindars. Regulation XIII of 1813, which was the first Municipal enactment in Bengal, provided for the appointment in large towns of chaukidars who were to be paid for by the residents, the preamble laying down the important principle that the people for whose benefit and protection such an establishment may be entertained should defray the charge of their maintenance. This is also the underlying principle of the present Chaukidari Act, VI of 1870. In Eastern Bengal, where there are no *chakran* lands, the provisions of Regulation XIII of 1813 were, by executive order and without any legal authority, extended to the village watch in rural areas. In Mr. McNeile's opinion the landholders as such were not, and never had been, bound to maintain the village watch. Attempts to legislate with a view to making the zamindars responsible for the maintenance of the village watch were abandoned in 1851 and again in 1863, owing to the strong opposition which they aroused, mainly on the ground put forward by the British Indian Association in 1851 that "the assumption by the Legislature of the power of transferring to the landholders the burden of supporting the village watchmen, which has from time immemorial been borne by

another class of the subjects of the State" would constitute a breach of the terms of the Permanent Settlement. The same view was taken by Sir Barnes Peacock, Chief Justice of Bengal, in a Minute of the 6th March 1854, in which he stated his opinion as follows: "The imposition of a tax upon the proprietors of agricultural lands for the maintenance of the village police would be a violation of the engagement entered into by the Government at the time of the Permanent Settlement." This view was accepted by Lord Dalhousie in a Minute of the 14th April 1854. Historically, therefore, it would be very difficult to justify any proposal to re-establish the responsibility of the landholders in Bengal for the maintenance of law and order, for the attempt was abandoned more than a century ago, and all subsequent legislation has been based on the assumption that there is no obligation on the landlords as such to maintain the village police, or to perform police duties other than those which they share with the different classes of persons mentioned in section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Moreover, the extensive subinfeudation and subdivision of proprietary rights, to which reference has been made in the preceding Chapter, would make the enforcement of the responsibility in the Bengal districts practically meaningless.

Village Headmen.

113. The suggestion has been made that it might be possible in Bengal to revive the responsibilities of zamindars and landholders for the maintenance of law and order through a new class of village headmen, nominated from among and remunerated by the zamindars and tenure-holders. It is a part of the scheme that the headmen should be the panches of their Unions, collecting the chaukidari tax in their respective villages, each headman being individually responsible for the maintenance of law and order in his village. The proposal is inconsistent with the principles underlying the present panchayati system in Bengal, under which the panchayats are the representatives of the chaukidari tax-payers and not the nominees of the landlords, whose interests are often antagonistic to those of the villagers. Any departure from this long-accepted principle is likely to be stigmatized as retrograde, and it is certain that it would be strongly opposed. Moreover, we do not think that any attempt to enforce the responsibility of the zamindars through their nominated headmen would be successful, or that it would give District Officers a greater hold over the zamindars than under the existing law. In Bengal, as elsewhere in India, all landlords are responsible for reporting crime under section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and we have not found that the responsibility is enforced in other Provinces to any greater extent than it is in Bengal. In the United Provinces, the lambardar is the representative of the landlords in revenue matters, but his responsibility in the matter of reporting crime, in his capacity of headman, is personal to himself and can not be enforced on the other members of the proprietary body by whom he is nominated. It is the same in the case of the mukaddams of the Central Provinces and of the headmen in zamindari areas in Madras. It is one of the main objects of the Circle System, the introduction of which we are now proposing, to secure the greater co-operation of the people in the administration of the law and to bring the officers of Government into

closer touch with the people. That object will not be secured by recruiting the members of the village councils entirely from the nominees of a particular class who, as Mr. Gupta observes, are not the sole repositories of power and influence, even in mofussil areas. We think, therefore, that it would be unwise to attempt to enforce the landlords' responsibilities for law and order in Bengal through their nominated headmen in the manner proposed, and that the preferable course is to utilize the existing panchayats for the performance of the duties which headmen are called upon to perform elsewhere. In Bengal, by a general order, every member of a panchayat appointed under Act VI of 1870 has been declared to be a headman for the purposes of section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code for all the villages in the Union, but the responsibility is seldom, if ever, enforced. The Eastern Bengal Circle scheme contemplates the appointment of some headmen who are not members of the panchayat, although it proposes to work them into the village system by making each a sort of additional member. We accept the desirability of the principle of local responsibility, and we prefer the alternative proposal, which has been referred to by Mr. Gupta in his report and has been supported by many witnesses before us, that the responsibility should be divided among the different members of the panchayat, each member being appointed headman in respect of the particular village or area which he represents in the Union.

Liability of Rent-receivers under Act VI of 1870.

114. Assuming then that it is not desirable to attempt to revive the direct responsibility of the zamindars and landholders for the maintenance of law and order, the question arises whether the liability for the pay of the village watch should not be shared by landlords who are in receipt of rent in any village of the Union, irrespective of whether they own a house or cutcherry in it or not. The question is one on which there is some difference of opinion. It was discussed at the Commissioners' Conference at Darjeeling on the 2nd October 1913, but no definite conclusion seems to have been arrived at, although the majority of the members accepted the principle that lands in the direct cultivation of the landlords should be liable to the tax. The proposal to assess rent-receivers as such is certain to be strongly opposed, as being a violation of the spirit, if not of the actual terms, of the Permanent Settlement, and it would not be very easy to justify, if we adhere to the hitherto accepted principle that the village watch is a municipal institution, maintained by the people whose property it is employed to protect. In Madras and in the United Provinces, the pay of the village watch is a charge on Provincial revenues, but it is interesting to note that in the permanently-settled area of the United Provinces the proprietors receive more favoured treatment in regard to the payment of the local rates, from which the remuneration of the village watch is met. They are allowed to recover the whole amount of the rate from permanent tenure-holders and fixed-rate and rent-free tenants and half from any other tenant. In the temporarily-settled areas, on the other hand, the whole amount is paid by the landlord, who cannot recover any portion of it from his tenants. In the Central Provinces the kotwars realize their own pay from the actual cultivators, whether they be landlords or tenants, and in practice the rent-receiver, who has no home farm in the village, pays nothing.

The objections to taxing rent-receivers as such do not apply with the same force to the owners of *khas* cultivation, gardens and orchards, but the gain to the chaukidari fund from this source would be comparatively very small, and we do not think it worth while to legislate, so as to make them liable to the tax. Generally, when a landlord has *khas* cultivation or a garden or an orchard in his Union, he has also a dwelling-house or cutcherry, either of which is already liable to assessment. We believe that, if the maximum limit of taxation is raised to the extent that we have proposed and the assessments of the panchayats are carefully supervised, there will be nowhere any difficulty in meeting the increased demand on the chaukidari fund, which any enhancement in the pay of the chaukidars and dafadars may necessitate. This is also the opinion of the majority of the witnesses whom we have consulted. We think, therefore, that there is no need to widen the basis of taxation, and that the possession of a house or cutcherry should continue to be the criterion for the imposition of the tax. It might, however, be made clear that a house includes a building, boat, or temporary structure in which business of any kind is transacted, and not merely a dwelling-house, which is the construction liable to be put upon the section as it stands.

Summary.

115. The subjects dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs cover a wide ground, and it will be convenient to summarize briefly the conclusions at which we have arrived. We have discussed in this chapter the possibility of bringing the officers of Government into closer touch with the people by means of an improved system of village administration, and the creation of a subordinate agency, below the Subdivisional Officers, similar to that of Tahsildars in other Provinces. In the opening paragraphs we have noticed the great difficulties of administration with which officers serving in Bengal, and especially in the eastern districts, have to contend, and the disadvantages resulting from the absence of any subordinate agency, other than the police, to act as a means of communication between them and the villagers. We have shown that in the permanently-settled area of Bengal, with its centralized system of revenue collections, there is no place for Tahsildars, but that sufficient justification for the creation of a subordinate agency, below the Subdivisional Officer, can be found in the appointment of Circle Officers to supervise and control an organized system of village administration on the lines proposed by the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. This brought us to a consideration of the previous history of village administration in Bengal. Hitherto proposals in this connection have related chiefly to the chaukidari panchayats, and to a less extent to Union Committees under the Local Self-Government Act, and we have discussed in some detail the causes of the failure of each. We have shown that it is in the amalgamation of the functions of chaukidari panchayats with those of Union Committees, that the extended usefulness and improvement of the panchayats are most likely to be secured. We have proposed that the combined Union panchayats, exercising not only municipal, but also police and executive functions, should be the foundation of the whole system of local self-government

The district, according to our proposals, would be covered with a net work of Unions grouped into Circles, each of which would be in charge of an officer of the status of a Sub-Deputy Collector, who would live within his Circle, and whose main duty would be the supervision and control of the work of the Union panchayats. The Circle Officer might also be entrusted with many of the miscellaneous duties which are performed by Tahsildars in other Provinces. For reasons which we have given, we have suggested the substitution of Circle Boards for the existing Local Boards. The transfer of the Public Works cess will enable the District Boards to finance the smaller bodies and to furnish them with the nucleus of a fund which, it is hoped, they will supplement by local taxation. There are many details to be considered, but before discussing these we have thought it necessary to deal with certain points which have been raised regarding the relations of the chaukidars with the panchayats and the regular police, the character of their duties, the pay that they should receive, and how any increase in their pay is to be met; for on the decision of these questions must largely depend the nature of the duties and responsibilities to be assigned to the panchayats. We have stated our reasons for the view that the chaukidars should be primarily village servants, at the same time sounding a note of warning against the danger of doing anything, at any rate until the Circle System is firmly established, which might tend to weaken the influence of the police in the villages. We have replied to the arguments of those who have advocated before us the abolition of the chaukidari tax and the placing of the chaukidars under the sole control of the police. As regards the pay of the chaukidars, we have stated why we consider that the question should not, as hitherto, be approached solely from the police point of view. We have deprecated the increasing tendency of late to treat the chaukidar as a whole-time servant of Government, and have given our reasons for the belief that the elaborate systems of combined night patrols, which are being introduced in some places, are a mistake. All this has an important bearing on the question of the chaukidar's pay, and, although some increase will doubtless be necessary in places, we have expressed the view that it must be left to the District Officer to decide each case on its merits, and not only in the light of purely police considerations. We have proposed that the maximum limit of taxation should be raised, and also the maximum rate of the pay of the chaukidar, which at present is Rs. 6 a month. In connection with the proposal that zamindars should be held liable for some portion of the chaukidar's pay, we have discussed the question, which we have been specially asked to consider, of the responsibility of zamindars and landholders for the maintenance of law and order. We have shown that it would be practically impossible to enforce such responsibility in Bengal, that nothing would be gained by attempting to do so, and that the preferable course is to utilize the existing panchayats for the performance of the duties which headmen are called upon to perform elsewhere. We have stated our opinion that, if the limit of taxation is raised and the assessments of the panchayats

are carefully supervised, as under the Circle System they are likely to be, there should be no difficulty in meeting any necessary increase in the chaukidar's pay, and that there is consequently no need to widen the basis of taxation. The decision of these general principles has cleared the ground for the consideration in the next chapter of the details of the proposed Circle System.

CHAPTER VII.

Detailed Proposals for a Village Organization.

The Circle System.

116. The proposal for the creation in Bengal of what has come to be known as the Circle System may be said to have originated with the remarks of the Royal Commission on Decentralization in paragraph 601 of their Report, in which they suggest the formation of Circles within sub-divisions, and in paragraphs 699-702, in which they recommend that, in the interests of decentralization and in order to associate the people with the local task of administration, an attempt should be made to constitute and develop village panchayats for the administration of local village affairs. The Commission recognized that it would be impossible to lay down any definite method of procedure for the development of a village system, and that it must be left to each Province to decide on what line the advance should be made. They laid special stress on the importance of keeping the movement completely under the eye and hand of the district authorities, and they remarked on the general consensus of opinion among those whom they had consulted, that any new departure on these lines should be made under the special guidance of sympathetic officers. In most of the districts of Bengal, before the redistribution of the Provinces in 1912, the President system had already been introduced, and the materials were thus at hand for making a start, but Sir Edward Baker was not prepared to go so far as the Commission had recommended. In the Bengal Government letter No. 993 of the 4th March 1910, it was suggested that a cautious and tentative advance should be made in the further development of the President panchayat system, and that, wherever possible, chaukidari panchayats should be amalgamated with existing Union Committees, whose power for usefulness had been considerably increased by the passing of Act I of 1908. In the meantime, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam were elaborating a more ambitious and far-reaching scheme for the introduction into that Province of a Circle System, on the lines advocated by the Decentralization Commission, and, in its letter No. 1079 A. of the 11th April 1910, a preliminary report was submitted, and a further report promised when more definite information had been obtained. The Government of India were of opinion that the Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme would be likely to prove much more effective than the system proposed by the Government of Bengal, and they expressed the hope that it would bring about a very material improvement, not only in the control of the village police, but also in the administration generally. The Government of Bengal were accordingly requested to reconsider the proposals made in their letter of the 4th March 1910, and the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam was asked for a further report on the progress made in elaborating the details of its proposed Circle scheme.

Early proposals for the introduction of a Circle System.

117. Meanwhile the defects of the President system and the alleged weakening of the police influence, which was said to have resulted

therefrom, had been discussed in the Annual Reports on the Administration of police in Bengal and in Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1909 and 1910: and in their letter No. 691 of the 23rd June 1911, the Government of India asked the Government of Bengal to take steps to remedy these defects, or to hold the President scheme entirely in abeyance until the necessary agency for its control and supervision could be provided. A memorandum on the working of the system was accordingly prepared under the orders of the Bengal Government, and was considered at a conference of Commissioners held at Darjeeling in October 1911. As the result of this conference, it was decided to introduce what was described as a "Circle System," to control and guide Presidents of panchayats in districts where the President system was in force, and ten Sub-Deputy Collectors were appointed for the purpose and sent to work as Circle Officers in selected subdivisions. In October 1911, Mr. D. Weston, I.C.S., was placed on special duty to supervise the work of these officers. The detailed proposals for the introduction of a Circle System in the Eastern Bengal and Assam districts had, in the meantime, been submitted by the Board of Revenue of that Province with Mr. Dixon's letter No. 1131 of the 7th August 1911. The proposals were accepted by the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and in Mr. LeMesurier's letter No. 5075 A. of the 17th November 1911, the Government of India were informed that it was proposed, with their approval, to introduce the experimental scheme into the three subdivisions of Barisal Sadar, Natore and Chandpur, with effect from the 1st January 1912. The redistribution of the Provinces supervened, and the Government of India decided to defer the passing of any orders on the proposals of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government, until they had been considered by the Government of Bengal. The Government of Sir Edward Baker were apparently not fully convinced of the necessity for such an elaborate scheme, and they preferred to await Mr. Weston's report on the more modest scheme, which had been introduced under his supervision in the preceding year. Mr. Weston submitted his report on the 20th August 1912, and it was decided that the experiment should be continued and extended to some of the districts in Eastern Bengal. Mr. J. N. Gupta, I.C.S., was accordingly placed on special duty to carry on Mr. Weston's work. Ten more Sub-Deputy Collectors were placed at his disposal, and the Government of India were asked to sanction an addition to the cadre of 40 more posts of Sub-Deputy Collectors for the still further extension of the scheme. Mr. Gupta completed his enquiries in October 1913 and submitted his report on the 3rd November following. Our Committee was constituted with effect from the 10th November, and one of the points, which we have been asked specially to consider, is whether the scheme experimentally introduced by Mr. Weston and Mr. Gupta should be approved, and, if so, on what lines it might be further developed.

Deputation of Mr. D. Weston.

118. The Bengal scheme is described as a "Circle Scheme," but it is very different from that proposed by the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, the essential feature of which is that the Circle Officers should live in conveniently central places within their Circles, which should be sufficiently small to enable them to come into constant contact with the panchayats and the leading residents of the Unions, to

instruct the Presidents in their new duties and to exercise a close and careful supervision over their work. The instructions to Mr. Weston were that the special officers were to be posted to selected subdivisions where the President system was in force, with the somewhat vague and indefinite direction that they were "to control and guide the Presidents and to improve the working of the President Panchayat system." There were some further instructions regarding the holding of parades of chaukidars before the Presidents as well as at the thanas, and it was added that the experiment should be tried as widely as possible within the limit of the number of Sub-Deputy Collectors who could be spared for employment on the special work. The ten Sub-Deputy Collectors were accordingly distributed among seven subdivisions in the Presidency, Burdwan and Orissa Divisions, and posted to the subdivisional headquarters. Their main duties were the rearrangement of Union boundaries, the revision of the *personnel* of the panchayats and the enforcement of the rules in Mr. Wheeler's Manual, which was still described as provisional and up to that time had not been systematically observed in most districts. We doubt whether there was any very clear idea at the outset what the next step was to be when the revision was completed, but Mr. Weston was able to demonstrate, in paragraphs 6 and 7 of his Report, the chaotic state into which the panchayat system had been allowed to fall in many districts in Bengal; and his conclusion was that there was then still much spade-work to be done in reorganizing the system, before any idea of extending the powers and duties of the panchayats could be entertained. He thought, however, that the experiment, so far as it had gone, had met with some success in remedying many local grievances, especially in connection with the assessment and collection of the chaukidari tax, and in bringing local wants to notice; and he recommended that the system should be extended.

Deputation of Mr. J. N. Gupta

119. It has already been mentioned that the proposals of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government for the experimental introduction of a Circle System into three selected subdivisions of the Bakarganj, Tippera and Rajshahi districts, which had been sent back to the Bengal Government for consideration, had been kept in abeyance pending the result of Mr. Weston's enquiries. On receipt of Mr. Weston's report, the Government decided to continue the experiment on the same lines under Mr. J. N. Gupta, and to extend it to some of the districts in Eastern Bengal. Twenty Sub-Deputy Collectors were placed under Mr. Gupta, including the ten officers who had been working under Mr. Weston, and they were employed in 14 subdivisions of 11 districts, some subdivisions having two officers each and others only one. We have had the advantage of seeing Mr. Gupta's full and interesting report on the results of his deputation, and we have also personally inspected the work of several of the special officers on the spot. Mr. Gupta has described in detail the work done by each of these officers, and it is unnecessary for us to go over the same ground; but it is evident from his report that Mr. Gupta looked upon his work as merely preliminary to the development of the scheme on the more advanced lines contemplated by the Government of Eastern Bengal

and Assam. In the course of our enquiries we have questioned a number of persons, official and non-official, not only in the Eastern Bengal districts but also in other parts of Bengal, and we have been greatly impressed by the almost complete unanimity in favour of the Eastern Bengal and Assam proposals. There are, of course, differences of opinion in matters of detail, but on the general soundness of the principles underlying the proposals practically everyone is agreed. The special officers so far have been able only to revise the Union boundaries, to fix the number of chaukidars required, to rearrange their beats and to see that the rules in Mr. Wheeler's Manual are observed. In some cases they have succeeded in appointing a better class of men as Presidents, and they have been able to do this by holding out to them the inducement of the greater powers and privileges to come, for which the Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme provides. The work has been unevenly done, for much depends on the capacity of the Circle Officer and even more on the personal interest taken in his work by the District and Subdivisional Officers. Mr. Gupta reports that in many places the Circle Officers have been able to persuade the panchayats to carry out useful sanitary improvements and other works of local utility, such as the cleaning of tanks and wells, the removal of encroachments and the like; while the good relations that have generally been maintained between the Circle Officers and the police are an encouraging sign for the future. But matters are now more or less at a standstill. The work of revision has been finished in the selected areas, and the Presidents are awaiting the fulfilment of the hopes that have been held out to them of more real and useful powers, and freedom from police influences. Circle Officers do not quite know what they are expected to do next, and in some cases they are employed on miscellaneous duties at headquarters, in order that their time may be fully occupied. In our opinion no real system has so far been introduced, least of all a Circle System depending for its success on the local knowledge and local interests of the Circle Officer and the village panchayats. All that has been done is a certain amount of preliminary preparation for the introduction of a Circle System. So far there has been no true experiment, and we think it very desirable that no further time should be lost by continuing the scheme on its present lines. We ourselves are entirely convinced of the soundness of the "Circle System" proposed by the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government, and we can see no better way of introducing a real system of village administration, and of making the members of the panchayats useful alike to their fellow-villagers and to the Government. The history of chaukidari panchayats and of Local Self-Government Union Committees has shown how hopeless it is to expect useful and efficient work from honorary agencies, so long as they are merely called upon to perform duties which are often unattractive and must frequently bring them into opposition to their fellow-villagers, and are given no real power and responsibility. It is chiefly in the exercise of judicial functions and in the power to raise and spend money on local improvements, that local authorities acquire importance, but it is also essential that the exercise of these functions should be closely and carefully supervised by sympathetic officers on the spot. The supervision exercised by one or two officers at the

headquarters of a subdivision or district has not, it has been clearly proved, been sufficient. If the panchayats are to be of real use to the administration in the manner contemplated by the Circle System, it is essential that the Circles should not be too large, and that the Circle Officers should live within their charges and not at headquarters. Every part of their Circles should be easily accessible to them, and they should be able to visit each Union at least once a month. The Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme provides for this, and we think that efforts should now be concentrated, and the system fully introduced into as many complete districts as possible, so that the experiment may be made on a really administrative scale. We are convinced that it would be a wiser policy to utilize the available staff of Circle Officers in two or three complete districts, rather than to distribute them among several subdivisions, not only because the arrangement we advocate would furnish a more useful object-lesson, by showing how the system would affect the administration of entire districts, but also because District Officers are likely to take a greater interest in the experiment, if it affects the whole of the area under their charge. Otherwise there will be waste of power and material, and no useful result will be achieved. This is also the view of the great majority of the persons whom we have consulted on the subject.

Proposals of the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

120. The scheme for the experimental introduction of a Circle System into the Eastern Bengal districts has been very fully described in the letter No. 1131 of the 7th August 1911, to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam from Mr. Dixon, Secretary to the Board of Revenue of that Province. The scheme had been elaborated with great care by the Hon'ble Mr. Melitus, the First Member of the Board, who had made a special study of the subject, and it was so complete and had been so fully thought out down to the smallest details, that the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam decided to adopt it without further question and to give it an immediate trial. The proposals are summarised in paragraph 84 of the Board's letter and, subject to certain important modifications which we will notice hereafter, we think that the scheme should be given an immediate trial in selected districts. We are confident that eventually the Circle System will enable District and Subdivisional Officers to acquire a more complete knowledge of the conditions and requirements of their charges, besides bringing them into closer and more sympathetic association with the people, and that this must result in a great improvement in the general administration. Judged by this standard, the reform is probably more urgently required in Mymensingh than in any other district in the Province, but, until the district is divided, it will be impossible for the District and Subdivisional Officers to spare time for the adequate supervision of the work of the Circle Officers. We think that it would be unwise to run the risk of failure by any premature attempt to introduce the scheme into Mymensingh.

Proposed introduction of the scheme into the Dacca District.

121. We would put Dacca next in order of urgency and we look upon this district as a most favourable field for the experiment, partly owing to the generally advanced condition of the people, and partly because the ground has already been well prepared. This is one of the three districts in Eastern Bengal into which Mr. Savage introduced his President system,

and since October 1911 three special officers have been working under Mr. Gupta in the Munshiganj and Sadar Subdivisions, with very encouraging results. We have interviewed several Presidents and members of the panchayats in both subdivisions, and we are satisfied that there will be no difficulty in securing the services of capable persons to act as Presidents and members of the panchayats. This is also the view of Mr. Birley, the Collector, and of many other witnesses, including Rai Suresh Chandra Singh Bahadur, the Sadar Subdivisional Officer, who has had great experience of chaukidari work in this district and is very anxious to see the Circle System introduced. Moreover, the system of serving miscellaneous revenue processes through the Presidents and dafadars has been adopted throughout the district with considerable success, in spite of the small amount of supervision that hitherto could be spared for it. We have already recommended that the district should be divided into two, and we were doubtful at first whether it would not be better to defer the introduction of the Circle System until some time after the partition had been completed. Conditions, however, are so favourable that we think that the experiment might be introduced at once, on the understanding that it be accompanied by the partition of this heavy district. In other words, we recommend that, in the case of Dacca, the two reforms be introduced simultaneously. This is also the opinion of the local officers. The Collector, Mr. Birley, has, in consultation with us, prepared a scheme, and we recommend that no time should be lost in introducing it into the Dacca district, so far as can be done, in anticipation of any legislation that may be required before full effect can be given to it. We think that the scheme might serve as a model for all districts. It follows very closely the proposals of the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, but there are a few important modifications, notably in regard to the judicial functions of the panchayats and the position of the Union Committees in their relation to the local self-government system. We are further proposing that the present Local Boards should be replaced by Circle Boards, each of which will represent the Unions within the Circle. These and other details of the scheme we propose to discuss in the following paragraphs.

Area of Unions.

122. The Dacca scheme provides for the division of the district, as at present constituted, into 15 Circles. The Calcutta Conference of the 7th April 1913 were of opinion that, in areas where the density of the population averaged between 700 and 800 to the square mile, the area of the average Union should be from 10 to 12 square miles, as Mr. Wheeler himself had proposed. We agree that this should be adopted as the standard. In parts of the Dacca district, and especially in the Munshiganj subdivision, where the population is very dense and communications bad, the standard of 10 to 12 square miles would be too high. The Dacca scheme allows for these difficulties, and in a few Circles the average area of the Unions varies from 4 to 6 square miles. For statistical and administrative purposes it is essential that the Unions should comprise entire Revenue Survey mauzas.

Functions of the Union Committees.

123. It is proposed that every chaukidari Union, in districts in which the Circle System is introduced, should be constituted an Union

Committee under the Local Self-Government Act. The inconvenience likely to arise from the existence of two local authorities side by side and the danger of friction have often been pointed out, and the desirability of combining the functions of the two bodies in a single panchayat has frequently been pressed. The Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme merely contemplated the fusion of existing Union Committees with the chaukidari panchayats, and the majority of the members of the Commissioners' Conference held at Darjeeling on the 2nd October 1913 agreed that it was desirable that arrangements should be made to admit of the same body of men performing the functions of both local authorities. Our proposals go somewhat further. Our special desire is to secure the performance of those functions essential to village municipal life by a representative village body. To condemn the only bodies truly representative of village interests to the perpetual assessment and collection of the chaukidari tax, without handing over to them those functions which alone can give them real vitality, would be a fatal error. We contemplate that the whole district should be mapped out into combined local self-government and chaukidari Unions, and that these Unions should form the basis of the local self-government system of the district. The amalgamation of the two bodies will require legislation, and how this can be secured is a question of some difficulty. It was at one time proposed to include in the Bill for the amendment of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, which was subsequently passed as Act I of 1908, a provision enabling the Lieutenant-Governor to direct by notification that all functions of a panchayat under the Chaukidari Act should be discharged by the Union Committee constituted for that village. The proposal was dropped, no doubt because the number of Union Committees in existence was small, while, owing to the fact that the District Magistrate was invariably Chairman of the District Board and Subdivisional Officers were generally Chairmen of the Local Boards, there would have been no practical difficulty in carrying the amalgamation into effect by executive order. In paragraph 722 of their Report, the Decentralization Commission stated their opinion that the supervision of panchayati affairs must rest with the local officers of Government and not with District or Local Boards, and, following this view, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam suggested that the Local Self-Government Act should be amended so as to enable the Local Government to declare in any case, that the Union Committee is to consist of the persons for the time being members of the panchayat under the Chaukidari Act. The form which the legislation should take is a matter for the consideration of the Legislative Department, but we think it essential that the control of the local officers over the working of the combined panchayats in the exercise of their various functions should be maintained.

Constitution of Union Panchayats.

124. The number of members of the panchayat should not be less than five nor more than nine, as in the case of Union Committees under section 38 of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act. The present maximum of five members for Chaukidari Panchayats was sufficient when the single hamlet, or small group of hamlets, was the unit of

chaukidari administration, but it is not sufficient to admit of adequate representation of all parts of the existing Unions.

The members of the Union Panchayats should be partly elected and partly nominated, in the proportion of two-thirds elected and one-third nominated. This departure from the provisions of sections 39 to 41 of the Local Self-Government Act and the rules for the election of members of Union Committees framed under section 138(*a*) is, in our opinion, necessary, as in addition to their municipal functions the panchayats will perform certain judicial and executive duties, with which the District Boards will have no concern. These will require special qualifications, to secure which careful selection will be necessary. Otherwise the rules are simple and easily adaptable to the new conditions proposed, and they are in accordance with the recommendations of the Decentralization Commission in paragraph 705 of their Report. The term of appointment should, we think, be three years as in the case of members of the Chaukidari Panchayats under Act VI of 1870, and not merely two years, the term prescribed for members of Union Committees under Act III of 1885.

Chairmen of the Panchayats.

125. The Chairman or President, as he might preferably be called, should be elected by the members of the panchayat under section 41A of Act III of 1885, but, for the reasons given in the preceding paragraph, the appointment should be subject to the approval of the District Magistrate and not of the District Board, and should be made by him, if the panchayat fail to elect a Chairman. Practically the result will be the same as at present, the District Magistrate being always the Chariman of the District Board.

Duties of the Panchayats.

126. The functions of the Union Panchayats under the proposed Circle scheme will include the following :—

Police and Chaukidari,		Executive,
Judicial,		Local Self-Government.

So far no judicial functions have been entrusted to panchayats, although the powers of a Magistrate under certain preventive sections of the Criminal Procedure Code have been conferred on Presidents under Mr. Savage's scheme.

Police and Chaukidari functions of the Panchayats.

127. It is proposed that each member of the panchayat should be appointed headman under section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code, not for the entire Union but only for the particular ward which he represents. His functions will be those prescribed by the Village Chaukidari Act and by the rules in the Chaukidari Manual, except that, if a Secretary is appointed to receive and collect the tax, it will not be necessary for the panchayat to appoint one of their own number to be a collecting member.

In paragraphs 49 to 57 of their letter of the 7th August 1911, the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board have dealt very fully with the question of the duties to be entrusted to the panchayats under the

heads "Police and Crime" and "Village Police," and we agree generally with their proposals. In regard to the control of the panchayats over the chaukidars, many points for consideration arise. Some of these have been discussed in the preceding chapter, and in others orders have already been issued by Government. On the question of the continuance of the parades of chaukidars at the thana after the Circle System is introduced, there is some difference of opinion. In the United Provinces the chaukidars receive their pay through the officer in charge of the thana, and they are required to attend the thana once a week at the most, but regular parades are not held. In Madras, the talayaris are paid by the headmen, and they do not go to the thana, unless they have something particular to report, the policy of Government being to discourage such visits. In the Central Provinces, the chaukidars realise their own pay from the villagers and there are no regular thana parades, but they attend the thana once a week in the same way as in the United Provinces. Many witnesses advocate that, under the Circle System, thana parades should be abolished and that the chaukidars should be paid by the Presidents, if possible, in the presence of the Circle Officer. The Indian Police Commission, in paragraph 49 of their Report, strongly condemned the system of "chaukidari parades" as practised in Bengal. We realize the force of these remarks, and we look forward to a time, not far distant, when these thana parades can be wholly, or almost wholly, abolished. We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the serious events which have happened in Bengal since the days of the Police Commission. In the present critical state of affairs it would, we think, be unwise to make any sudden change, which may have the effect of weakening the influence of the regular police in the villages, and of reducing their already too imperfect local knowledge; but as soon as sufficient experience has been gained of the working of the Circle scheme, it would be desirable to review the position, to see how far a change in the system of parades and the system of payment of the chaukidars can be introduced.

Executive functions of the Panchayats.

128. Under the Circle System it is proposed to transfer certain miscellaneous duties from the police to the panchayats, including the compilation of the returns of births and deaths, reports on epidemics, whether affecting human beings or cattle, and the collection of crop and other statistics. The subject is dealt with in paragraphs 32 and 58-60 of the Eastern Bengal Board's letter of the 7th August 1911, and among the other duties, which the Board proposed should be made over to the panchayats, are "the conduct of statistical enquiries, the dissemination of agricultural information, the collection of information required by Government on these and other matters, and the holding of such special enquiries as Government may direct." If these duties are to be satisfactorily performed, it will be necesssry, as the Board have noted in paragraphs 29 and 59 of their letter, that the panchayats should be provided with suitable forms and that clear printed instructions should be drawn up for their guidance.

Service of Processes.

129. The subject of the service of processes through panchayats is dealt with in paragraphs 66 and 67 of the Board's letter. We are in

general accord with their suggestions, and we think that the system should be extended to all districts into which the Circle scheme is introduced. Most of the witnesses whom we have questioned on this point have agreed that this is a very desirable reform. The experiment was started by Mr. Savage in 1905, and was gradually introduced into the districts of Dacca, Tippera, Rajshahi, Hooghly, Balasore and Muzaffarpur. In 1907 it was extended to the district of Puri and in 1912 to Cuttack. It failed in Muzaffarpur and was abandoned in 1911, partly because no one was particularly enthusiastic about it, but chiefly because, in the absence of special officers to supervise it, the experiment never really had a chance. Year after year the local officers had pointed out, as they had done in Orissa also, that the want of adequate control of the panchayats and dafadars would remain a radical objection to the system, but Government were unable to spare special officers to supervise the work. The experiment was abandoned in Rajshahi also. It was continued and is still in force in Hooghly, Dacca and Tippera, in which districts special officers have been working under Mr. Gupta. The local officers are anxious that the system should be continued, and from what we have seen and heard we have no doubt that the experiment is proving a success. In their Resolution No. 2487 P.—D. of the 22nd November 1911, the Government of Bengal remarked that the system is infinitely superior to the practice of service through peons, stating as their reasons for this opinion that a certain amount of local publicity is given to the process; the President and dafadars are amenable to local public opinion; they do not need the assistance of the plaintiffs' men, and therefore, on the whole, the probabilities of fraud and suppression are considerably reduced. Mr. Gupta considers that the results so far are extremely hopeful, and there is a consensus of opinion that, with the appointment of a Secretary or munshi to assist the panchayat and with proper supervision and adequate postal facilities, the goal to be aimed at is the extension of the system, not only to a certain class of criminal processes, but also eventually to civil processes. In Hooghly, simple criminal processes are now being served through the panchayats and, according to the local officers, the results are very satisfactory. The difficulties in the way, especially at first, are defective service owing to the ignorance of the dafadars, the opposition of the nazarat, the want of business-like methods on the part of the Presidents, which leads to delays in making over and returning processes and, chief of all, delays in the post, which may be due to inadequate postal arrangements or to the posting being unintelligently managed in the nazarat. These difficulties can be overcome by the careful and intelligent supervision of the Circle Officers. It is impossible, as we have seen in Orissa, for the ordinary staff of the districts to give to the work the attention that is required, and we think that the further extension of the system should be confined to districts in which the Circle System has been introduced. It is necessary, not only to facilitate the service of processes, but also on general administrative grounds, that there should be a post-office in each Union, as we were told is the case in the Hooghly district. The duties of post-master might be entrusted to

the local school-master or to the Secretary to the panchayat, but these are details which may be considered in consultation with the postal authorities.

Judicial functions of the Panchayats.

130. The Decentralization Commission, in paragraph 708 of their Report, recommended that panchayats should be given civil and criminal jurisdiction in petty cases arising within the village. The Indian Police Commission of 1902-03 had also suggested in paragraph 50 of their Report, that the experiment of making over petty criminal cases to selected chaukidari panchayats might be tried, and extended if it proved a success. The suggestion has frequently been repeated since, but so far nothing has been done. The Government of India, in Sir Harold Stuart's letter No. 6, dated the 27th March 1910, to all local Governments, expressed themselves in favour of the views of the Decentralization Commission, and drew attention to the useful work that is being done by village courts in various Provinces in India. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board of Revenue, in their proposals for the introduction of a Circle scheme, recommended the creation of Benches, consisting of selected Presidents sitting with the Circle Officer not oftener than twice a month at the Circle head-quarters or at convenient centres in the interior, and also of arbitration courts, similarly constituted, for the settlement of any disputes which all the parties concerned might voluntarily refer to arbitration. They further proposed that, after the necessary legislation had been undertaken the system should be extended by the creation of village Benches, consisting of not less than three members of the Panchayat sitting independently for the disposal of petty civil as well as criminal cases occurring within the Unions. The majority of the witnesses whom we have consulted have welcomed the proposal to confer judicial powers on the panchayats, but opinions differ as to the best mode of giving effect to it. The question was discussed at the Calcutta Conference of the 7th April 1913 and again at the Conference of Commissioners at Darjeeling on the 3rd October 1913. At the former Conference the members were of opinion that village Benches, composed of the Circle Officers and selected Presidents, and exercising summary powers under section 261 of the Criminal Procedure Code, should be formed in selected areas for the disposal of petty criminal cases, and that these Benches should exercise the same powers as the Circle Officer. The majority of the members of the Darjeeling Conference accepted the principle that the Circle Officers should preside over the Benches, and they thought that the other members should ordinarily be chosen from among the Presidents of the Union Panchayats. They were further of opinion that the Benches might be empowered to try petty civil suits, provided they were placed under the supervision of the District Magistrate, but the method in which effect should be given to this proposal was not discussed and the whole question was left in a very indefinite position.

Raison d'etre of Village Courts.

131. It seems to us that in all these discussions there has been some confusion of ideas. The Decentralization Commission and the Government of India contemplated, as the basis of their proposals, a system of village courts, similar to those which have been created under special enactments in Madras, the United Provinces, the Punjab.

Bombay and Burma. The proposal of the Conferences is merely an extension of the ordinary judicial system of the country through the medium of dependent Benches of Honorary Magistrates, constituted under the Criminal Procedure Code. The two ideas are organically different. It was pointed out at the Darjeeling Conference that the present policy of Government is to concentrate judicial powers in the hands of individual Magistrates, on the ground that the work of honorary Benches, especially away from head-quarters, has not proved satisfactory; but apart from this we do not think that Benches constituted in the manner proposed by the Calcutta and Darjeeling Conferences would be of much benefit to the people. The Circle Officer would not be able to attend the Bench more than twice a month at the most without detriment to his other important duties, and the people would not care to wait so long for the Bench to meet, and would continue to resort to the regular courts. But these criticisms could not in any way apply to the proposals of the Decentralization Commission. The Commission contemplated a system of village courts of equity, which would be freed from the observance of complicated rules of evidence and the technicalities of the ordinary legal procedure, and would bring to bear on cases before them their own intimate acquaintance with village sentiment and their local knowledge of the facts. The primary objects of these village courts was not to afford relief to the regular tribunals. They were partly designed to give petty litigants the opportunity, if they wished to avail themselves of it, of settling their disputes by a simple and inexpensive procedure near their homes, but their main purpose was educative, to develop the sense of communal responsibility within the Union, and to teach the people to manage the affairs of their own villages. At the same time it was hoped that the creation of these village courts would enhance the influence of the panchayats and strengthen and encourage them in the performance of their other duties, thus gradually paving the way to the exercise by them of higher powers. If judicial officers of Government presided over the Benches, all these advantages would be lost, and there would be no justification for the grant to courts so constituted of special privileges in the way of simplified procedure and finality of decision. Elsewhere Government officers do not sit with the village courts, and we see no reason why, if there is to be any extension of the system to Bengal, it should not be on lines similar to those adopted in other provinces.

Constitution of Village Civil Courts.

132. It is not clear from the proceedings of the Darjeeling Conference of the 3rd October 1913, whether it was contemplated that the same Bench should exercise both civil and criminal functions, but we think that the constitution of the two courts must necessarily be different, although it would be convenient to give them a common centre in a permanent President, who, in civil cases, would take the plaint in the first instance and in criminal cases be empowered to take cognizance of offences, triable by the Bench, on complaints made before him. It is recognised in other Provinces that, where village Benches have been constituted for the disposal of petty civil suits, the parties should be given some voice in the composition of the court. In Madras,

the Bench consists of three Judges. Under the Madras Village Courts Act the village Munsif, who is ordinarily the Village Headman, is the President, the other two members being selected, one by each party to a suit, from a list prepared and maintained by the Collector. There are more elaborate provisions for the selection of the members of the courts by the parties in the Punjab Panchayat Act of 1912, and in the Bill for the establishment of village courts in Bombay, which is now under the consideration of the Bombay Government, but we prefer the Madras procedure and think that it might be adopted in Bengal. The President of the Panchayat would be the permanent President of the Bench, and, in the case of Civil Benches, the other two members would be selected, one by each party, from a list of nominees who would ordinarily, but not necessarily, be members of the panchayat, and might, if thought desirable, be chosen by the villagers. The objection has been taken that the President of the panchayat, as an elected and temporary official, will inspire less confidence than the Village Headman in Madras who is a permanent village official paid by Government; and it has been suggested that, as proposed in the Bombay Bill, it might be left to the parties, if they wish, to select their own Bench, each nominating two members who would themselves nominate their own President. We think that the procedure in the Bombay Bill is unnecessarily complicated and uncertain, and that it would give rise to confusion and delay, which would defeat the main object of these village courts. We have proposed in paragraph 125 above that the President of the panchayat should be elected by the other members. The civil courts should, at least for the present, retain concurrent jurisdiction. The plaintiff need not, therefore, take his case to the village court unless he wishes. We think that these are sufficient safeguards, and that it would simplify the procedure and obviate delay in the disposal of these petty cases, if there were a permanent President of the Bench. In the United Provinces, as also in Madras and Bombay, there are village Munsifs sitting singly, but the tendency is to replace such courts, where they exist, by benches or panchayats. Most of the witnesses whom we questioned in Madras were strongly in favour of the further development of village Benches, in place of village Munsifs sitting singly, and the same opinion has been expressed by the Government of Madras in recent Resolutions, in which local officers are enjoined to encourage the extension of Benches, as far as lies in their power.

Constitution of Village Criminal Courts.

133. There are no village Benches for the disposal of criminal cases in any of the Provinces which we have visited, but in Madras Village Headmen, who are *ex-officio* Village Magistrates under Madras Regulation XI of 1816, dispose of a large number of petty cases. These courts are specially excluded from the operation of the Criminal Procedure Code, and simple rules have been framed for their guidance in trying cases. In the Punjab a Bill for the establishment of village Benches for the disposal of petty criminal cases in such local areas as the Local Government might determine was introduced into the Legislative Council in September 1911, but, owing to the opposition that it aroused in

some quarters, Government decided in October of the following year to defer action in the matter, until experience had been gained of the working of the Civil Panchayat Act, which had been passed in April 1912. The bill was accordingly withdrawn, although there was a strong body of opinion, both official and non-official, in its favour, and the Lieutenant-Governor himself expressed the hope that the measure would before very long be re-introduced and added to the Statute Book. We see no reason why Bench courts, similar to those proposed in the Punjab Bill, should not be constituted in a considerable number of selected Unions, with the President of the panchayat as the President of the Bench. The other members of the Bench should ordinarily be appointed from among the members of the panchayat, and three should form a quorum for the disposal of case work.

Criminal Benches.

134. As regards the procedure to be followed and the class of cases to be tried by the Criminal Benches, we think that legislation should, with certain modifications, follow the lines of the Punjab Village Criminal Justice Bill, to which we have just referred. In Madras, the village panchayats in 1912 disposed of 12,153 cases, chiefly trivial cases of assault, abusive language and petty thefts, where the property stolen did not exceed one rupee in value. The Village Magistrates have no power to fine offenders, and they can only punish by imprisonment in the village *choultry* for a period not exceeding 12 hours, or, in the case of low-caste people, by putting the offender in the stocks for a period not exceeding six hours. There is no procedure prescribed by Regulation XI of 1816, which requires the Village Magistrates only to report to the Taluk Magistrate all cases in which they pass orders of punishment. A proposal is now under the consideration of the Madras Government to extend the jurisdiction of Village Magistrates to all cases of theft of property not exceeding Rs. 5 in value, and to add to their existing powers of punishment by authorising them to inflict a fine up to Rs. 5. It is further proposed to associate panchayats with Village Magistrates for the disposal of petty criminal cases in certain localities, the constitution of the panchayats and the procedure to be followed by these village courts being regulated by rules framed by the Local Government. We think that, in Bengal, the Union Benches might be entrusted with the trial of cases of ordinary assault and simple theft under section 379, Indian Penal Code, where the value of the property stolen does not exceed Rs. 5 in value. They might deal with petty cases under sections 352, 323, 341, 426 and 504, Indian Penal Code, and section 24 of the Cattle Trespass Act, I of 1871, as well as with breaches of the District Board by-laws relating to encroachments on public thoroughfares, offences against sanitation, etc., committed within the jurisdiction of the Bench concerned. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and some of the other offences specified in the Punjab Bill might be included if the Bench is considered sufficiently capable. The President should be empowered to take cognizance of such cases on complaint made verbally to him or in writing. The Bench should have power to impose a fine not exceeding Rs. 20, but not to imprison offenders, and the jurisdiction of the Bench should be confined to

offences occurring in, and committed by persons resident in the Union. We do not think that the fines should be credited to the Union Fund, as proposed in the Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme; but fines imposed for breaches of the District Board by-laws should, as at present, be credited to the District Fund. As recommended by the Decentralization Commission in paragraph 710 of their Report, the procedure of the Courts should be under very simple rules, and there should be no fees, no record of depositions and no appeal. The orders of the court should be final, subject to revision by the District or Subdivisional Magistrate on the recommendation of the Circle Officer and after allowing the parties to show cause. Courts should execute their own orders in such manner as may be prescribed by the Local Government, processes being served and fines realized through the agency of the chaukidars in the first instance. In the Punjab, the Bench may direct confinement for 48 hours in default of payment of the fines, but we think that, if it should be found necessary to pass an order of imprisonment in default, the warrant should be transferred to the Subdivisional Magistrate for execution. The regular courts must for the present retain concurrent jurisdiction. Clause 10 of the Punjab Bill provides that, when a complaint is made before a Magistrate, having jurisdiction, of an offence cognizable by a Village Bench, or when any case is instituted before the Magistrate on a police report of such an offence, the Magistrate may, if he thinks fit, transfer the case to the Bench for disposal. We think that there should be a similar provision in Bengal, but, when once a complaint has been filed before the Bench or a case transferred to it for disposal, it should not be open to either party to claim, as a matter of right, the transfer of the case to one of the regular courts. In certain cases of offences against sanitation, public nuisances, encroachments, etc., the President might be empowered to take cognizance of the case on his own motion, and here, too, the accused should have no right to claim a transfer. The District Magistrate or the Subdivisional Officer should have the power in all cases to order transfer on the report of the Circle Officer, but we think that such cases are likely to be rare.

135. The establishment of village courts for the disposal of petty civil suits is supported by precedents from most Provinces. In Madras, Village Munsifs, who are usually selected headmen appointed by the Collector, disposed of 112,100 suits in 1912-13, and 9,260 suits were dealt with by Village Benches. In the Punjab, courts of panchayats have been appointed under the Punjab Panchayat Act of 1912, and last year they disposed of nearly 16,000 suits of different kinds. Village courts for the disposal of petty civil suits have also been created in the United Provinces, Burma and Bombay, and in the last mentioned Province a Bill is now under consideration for the extension of the powers and functions of these courts. We have had the opportunity of personally seeing the working of some of the village courts in Madras and have been favourably impressed with the prompt and efficient manner in which the business of the courts is conducted. They have power to try suits for money

due on contract, or for personal property, or for the value of such property, when the debt or demand does not exceed in amount or value the sum of Rs. 20, whether on balance of account or otherwise. If, however, the parties execute a written consent before the Village Munsif, the amount or value may extend up to Rs. 200. The Act provides a simple procedure for the trial of suits. There is no recording of depositions and no appeal, but the District Munsif may on revision set aside or modify any order of the village court on the ground of gross partiality or corruption, or if he finds that the decree is clearly unjust or contrary to law. Ordinarily no fees are charged, but the rules provide for the levy of small process-fees, where the defendants or witnesses live beyond the jurisdiction of the courts, or when the suits are so numerous that a special process-serving staff has to be employed. The village courts execute their own decrees, but on the application of the decree-holder, or of his own motion, the District Munsif may withdraw the execution of any decree from a village court and execute it himself. The provisions of the North-West Provinces and Oudh Village Courts Act, III of 1892, follow generally those of the Madras Act, and we think that legislation on similar lines should be adopted in Bengal. In both Provinces the regular Civil Courts have concurrent jurisdiction, and it is the same in other Provinces. The Bombay Bill proposes to give the village courts exclusive jurisdiction, but the proposal has met with considerable criticism. In Madras some of the witnesses whom we have examined look upon the concurrent jurisdiction of the District Munsif as a serious obstacle to the development of village courts, but the figures we have already quoted show that considerable use is nevertheless made of these courts, and we see no reason why it should be different in Bengal. We are of opinion, then, that the regular courts should have concurrent jurisdiction. In the Punjab, the village Benches are not bound by the rules of limitation prescribed by the Indian Limitation Act of 1877, but we prefer the provision in the Madras and the United Provinces Acts, that no suit or application shall be entertained by a village court after the expiration of three years from the time when the right to sue or make the application first accrued.

Legal Practitioners.

136. The practice regarding the appearance of legal practitioners before the village courts varies in different Provinces. In the Punjab and in the United Provinces, the rule is that no legal practitioners shall be permitted to appear in any proceeding before a village court, and a similar provision has been included in the Punjab Village Criminal Justice Bill. There is no such provision in the Madras Act, but it is a part of the scheme, now under the consideration of the Madras Government, for extending the jurisdiction of Village Magistrates and for constituting panchayats in certain local areas for the disposal of petty criminal cases, that legal practitioners should be prohibited from appearing. The Decentralization Commission recommended that parties in cases before the village courts should be required to appear in person, and not through lawyers. There is some difference of opinion among the witnesses whom we have examined on this point, and although the majority agree that it would be better

that legal practitioners should not appear before the village courts, some hesitate to recommend a specific provision in the law to this effect. We think that it would be inconsistent with the character and constitution of village courts and with the purpose for which they are created, to allow legal practitioners as such to practise in these courts, and we are strongly of opinion that they should be expressly excluded. The provisions of the Punjab and the United Provinces Acts are suitable, and we recommend that they should be adopted in Bengal.

Proposed experimental introduction of Village Courts in Bengal.

137. We have sketched above in brief outline the lines on which we think village courts might be established in Bengal. There is a strong body of opinion in favour of the creation of such courts for the disposal of both petty criminal and civil cases, and in view of what has been done in other Provinces we think that the experiment should be given a trial in Bengal. It will be one of the duties of the Circle Officer to instruct and prepare the village courts for the exercise of their functions. The experiment should be introduced gradually and cautiously, as soon as the necessary legislation has been undertaken. We think that it would be inadvisable to attempt to introduce it in anticipation of special legislation, for we feel that under ordinary conditions the experiment would be likely to fail and the whole system be discredited. Presidents are now often employed in making enquiries into complaints under section 202 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Most of them also have been vested with certain preventive powers under different sections of the Code, and these they may continue to exercise.

Local Self-Government: functions of Union Panchayats.

138. The duties and powers of Union Committees are detailed in Chapter III of Part III of Act III (B.C.) of 1885, as amended by Act I of 1908. The Committees are responsible for village roads and bridges, and for any portions of District and Local Board roads within the Unions made over to them, with their consent, by the District Board. Subject to the control of the District Board, and in accordance with rules framed by the Local Government, the Committees are required to provide for the sanitation, drainage and conservancy of the Union and for the prevention of public nuisances therein, and they have also extensive powers to cause works of sanitation and improvement to be executed, to control building operations, to deal with existing sources of water-supply, and add to them where necessary. If the income of any Union Committee is insufficient to meet the expenses incurred or likely to be incurred by it in connection with any works of sanitation, conservancy or water-supply, the Committee is authorised by section 118C to meet the deficiency by an assessment upon the owners of buildings, tanks and wells, and upon the occupiers of buildings within the Union. Hitherto this section has not been in force in Eastern Bengal, but it has recently been extended. Subject to rules framed by the Local Government, the Committees may be given control of the Board's Primary Schools and, with their own consent, of any dispensaries within the Unions. They may further be required by the District Magistrate to provide for the registration of births and deaths within the Unions and to submit such returns thereof as he may direct. Some witnesses have suggested that the area of 10 to 12 square

miles that has been adopted as the standard for Chaukidari Unions is too large for Union Committees constituted under the Local Self-Government Act. Their main objection to having the Unions so large is, that there can be no certainty that the money raised by local taxation within an Union will be spent for the benefit of the particular area in which it is levied. In a note of the 11th September 1912, on the history of the Union Committees in the Burdwan district, Mr. Moberly, a former Collector of the district, has laid special emphasis on this point. The objection has undoubtedly some force where, as in Burdwan, in the absence of any special officer to supervise their work, the Committees have to be left very much to their own resources. Under the Circle System it will be one of the duties of the Circle Officer to see that money collected is impartially spent, so as to benefit as far as possible all the parts of the Union. Moreover, the division of the Union into wards, each with its own elected representative as proposed by Mr. Gupta, will enable money to be raised and expended for the benefit of a particular ward. In Madras, the system of allotting to individual members of the panchayat the supervision of particular wards is in force in most Unions and we heard no complaints that the money raised by local taxation was unfairly appropriated for the benefit of particular areas.

Proposals for financing Union Panchayats.

139. The encouragement of Union Committees to use their powers for the improvement of village sanitation and water-supply will be one of the chief duties of the Circle Officer, and we think it advisable, that clear rules and instructions should be laid down for the guidance of the Committees in the exercise of their various functions under Chapter III of the Act. Hitherto, no rules have been framed except as regards the management of Primary Schools by Union Committees, and no real attempt has been made to grapple with the difficult problem of rural sanitation. The allotments made by the District Boards for sanitary work or for the improvement of water-supply are very inadequate. District Boards are now appointing Sanitary Inspectors, who are required to report on the sanitary conditions of the villages and to make proposals for their improvement. They will be of little use unless there are local agencies to co-operate with them and execute their recommendations. The Committees will require the nucleus of a fund to start with, and this can be provided by the distribution of a portion of the Public Works cess among the Unions. Mr. Birley has worked out a scheme for financing the Union Panchayats in the Dacca district, on the assumption that the whole district will be mapped out into Unions, and that each will receive a contribution. He calculates that, after allowing for the extra expenditure on establishment which the substitution of Circle Boards for Local Boards will entail, and after deducting one-third of the Public Works cess for expenditure by the District Board, the amount available for distribution to the Union Panchayats will give each Union on the average Rs. 220, a sum which should suffice to form the nucleus of a fund to be supplemented by local contributions. We think that the Committees should be allowed to accumulate their allotments over a

series of years, if they wish to do so, and that it should be laid down in the rules that any balance of a Union Fund unexpended at the close of a year is not to lapse to the District Fund. In Dacca, owing to the density of the population, the average area of the Unions is only 7·8 square miles, and it is probable that in other districts each Union might be given more than the Rs. 220 available in Dacca. It is impossible to lay down a hard and fast rule, and the case of each district will have to be decided on its own merits.

The need for a Munshi or Secretary to the Union.

140. In paragraph 89 of their letter to the Government of India, No. 1403P., dated the 19th March 1913, asking for an increase of 40 officers in the cadre of Sub-Deputy Collectors, the Government of Bengal remarked that the development of the Circle System must result in increasing very materially the burden of honorary service imposed on the President and panchayats, a burden which they cannot be expected to undertake unless they are given some clerical assistance. If this is true under the system introduced by Mr. Weston and continued by Mr. Gupta, it is still more true under the modified Eastern Bengal and Assam system which we are now proposing. The creation of Unions has made collection by a single collecting member more difficult than when the single village or a small group of hamlets was the unit of chaukidari administration. Now that the chaukidar is paid quarterly at the thana, instead of being solely dependent on the collecting member for his pay, and distress warrants are issued against the panchayats in cases of default, there is not the same inducement for the chaukidar to assist the collecting member of the panchayat in the collection of the tax, a duty which he is in fact required to perform by section 39 of the Chaukidari Act. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board, therefore, proposed to appoint a munshi chaukidar, paid at the same rate as the dafadar, to help the collecting member in the collection of the tax and to assist him in writing up the collection papers. For the performance of the clerical work of the Union the collecting member was to be the Secretary or, with the approval of the panchayat, he might appoint a Secretary on his own responsibility, who would be remunerated out of the 10 per cent. commission allowed by the Act. In their letter of the 19th March 1913, above referred to, the Bengal Government stated that they had sanctioned the appointment of 50 munshis as an experimental measure in six thanas of five districts on a pay of Rs. 10 *per mensem* each, of which Rs. 4 were to be contributed by Government. Subsequently these orders were modified and the experiment was confined to the Chandpur subdivision of the Tippera district, where a special officer was working under Mr. Gupta. Since then there has been considerable discussion as to whether it would be better to have a munshi as well as a Secretary, or to combine the functions of both in a paid Secretary, who would be responsible for all the clerical work of the Union and would do the actual work of collection of the tax, assisted by the chaukidars in their own beats, the panchayat still continuing to be responsible to Government for the punctual payment of the chaukidars. The question was put before the Commissioners' Conference of the 2nd October 1913,

but was withdrawn on the ground that the experiment in Chandpur had not been given a sufficiently long trial to enable a decision to be arrived at. We have seen the munshis working in Chandpur. In this subdivision the collection of vital statistics has been made over to Presidents, and the munshi assists the President in this and any other clerical work that he may have to do, which is at present very little. Here again, as the Circle System has not been fully introduced, there has been no real experiment, and it is difficult to estimate the potential usefulness of the munshis by the work which they are doing in Chandpur; but the impression left on us was, that they seemed to be entirely the Presidents' servants, and to be doing nothing to help the collecting members.

Collection of the Chaukidari Tax.

141. We should prefer to dispense with the munshi and to appoint a Secretary to each Union, who would collect the chaukidari tax and any tax imposed under Chapter III of the Local Self-Government Act, besides doing all the statistical and clerical work of the Union, supervising the service of processes and acting as Bench clerk to the Union Bench, if there is one, and as clerk to the Union panchayat. There would be no necessity for a collecting member. The members of the panchayat would still remain ultimately responsible to Government for the punctual payment of the chaukidars, and it might be arranged that each should represent a particular area within the Union, so that the responsibility might be more fairly distributed than it is at present. In practice, however, it should never be necessary to enforce this responsibility. The Act provides a simple procedure for the realization of arrears from defaulting assessees, and it will be the duty of the Circle Officer to see that the Secretary does his work properly, that the chaukidars' pay is promptly realized and that arrears are not allowed to accumulate. One of the worst features of the existing system, in our opinion, is the indiscriminate manner in which warrants are in some districts issued against the panchayats for the realization of the chaukidars' pay under section 45 of the Act. To quote one instance only, we found that in the Sadar Subdivision of Midnapur, where there are 337 Unions, no less than 307 warrants were issued against the panchayats in the first two quarters of last year. At the time of our inspection the pay of some of the chaukidars was more than six months in arrears, while in some cases warrants against the panchayats had been outstanding for more than three months. Some witnesses have proposed that the panchayats should be entirely relieved of their responsibility for the punctual payment of the chaukidars, and we recognize that there is much to be said in favour of the proposal. We are not prepared at present, however, to recommend any change in the law in this respect, and we think it desirable to wait until sufficient experience has been gained of the working of the Circle System. We hope that under that system it will rarely, if ever, be necessary to enforce the panchayats' responsibility. With the Circle Officer to see that the Secretary does his work and that the chaukidars help him, there should in practice be no occasion to resort to the provision of the law empowering

distraint of the property of the panchayats for arrears of the chaukidars' pay.

The Secretary should preferably be a local man. He would be remunerated from the 10 per cent. commission on collections allowed by the Chaukidari Act, and the 5 per cent. allowed by Act III of 1885 on collections under section 118 C. He should also receive at least Rs. 4 per mensem from Government from the miscellaneous work that he may be called upon to perform in connection with his Bench duties, the compilation of statistics, the preparation of crop forecasts and the service of processes. We think that he should not be a member of the panchayat, as some witnesses have proposed, but a servant of the panchayat appointed on their nomination with the approval of the Magistrate. His position should be recognized by law.

Circle Boards.

142. There is a strong body of opinion in favour of the substitution of Circle Boards for Local Boards in districts, in which the Circle System has been introduced. In the last chapter we have discussed the reasons for the failure of Local Boards, and have stated why we consider that the continued existence of these bodies, as at present constituted would be incompatible with any general extension of Union Committees throughout the district. A few witnesses would abolish Local Boards altogether and not replace them by Circle Boards at all, but we think that it would be impossible for the District Board to exercise adequate control over the work of so many Unions. A Circle Board should be a more useful agency and a more representative body than the existing Local Boards.

Construction of Circle Boards.

143. We propose that the Circle Boards should consist of 15 members, of whom two-thirds should be elected by the members of the Union Panchayats from among their number and the remaining one-third be appointed by the Commissioner, on the nomination of the District Magistrate. The objection has been raised that the proposal, if adopted, would exclude a number of persons, who are now entitled by rule 21 of Part II of the Election Rules to vote for the election of members of Local Boards; but under the system that we are now proposing all these persons will be entitled by rule 3 of Part I of the rules to vote for members of the Union Committees. This they cannot do at present, as only a few Committees have been created throughout the country, and in some districts there are none at all. Moreover, the Union Committees will now be the real working bodies below the District Board, instead of merely optional appendages as hitherto. The Circle Boards will be mainly a controlling agency, and their status will thus be entirely different from that of the existing Local Boards. The whole district will be covered with Unions, and all classes of persons will be represented in the elections for the Union Panchayats. There is no reason why any class should be given double representation. There will also be no necessity for the more elaborate procedure for the election of Local Board members now prescribed by Part II of the Election Rules. The whole procedure will be simplified, if we start from the smaller bodies and thus work up to the Circle and District Boards.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Circle Boards.

144. As regards the Chairmanship of the Circle Board, we consider that it is best to follow the analogy of the Chairmanship of the District Board; that is to say (*vide* section 22 of the Local Self-Government Act), the Chairman will be appointed by the Local Government, but, should the Local Government in any case so direct, the Chairman will be elected by the members of the Board from among their own number, subject to the approval of the Local Government. The time may come when the Circle Boards, or many of them, will have elected Chairmen, and the Act should provide for this contingency; but we are strongly of opinion, that it is essential to the success of the whole scheme that for some time to come the Circle Officer should be the Chairman of the Circle Board. Even when the power to elect their own Chairman is extended to a Circle Board, the Circle Officer should, we think, be the Secretary of the Board, if he is not himself elected Chairman. It is he who will be in constant association with the different Union Panchayats in the Circle, advising them and supervising their work. The Vice-Chairman of the Circle Board should be elected by the members of the Board in the same manner as the Vice-Chairmen of District Boards are now elected.

Functions of Circle Boards.

145. The Circle Boards should ordinarily meet once a quarter, but special meetings might be convened by the District and Subdivisional Officers at any time for particular purposes. The Circle Boards should be primarily an agency for the allotment of funds, the greater part of the work now performed by the Local Boards being made over to the Union Panchayats. Ordinarily a Circle Board should not execute work by its own agency or from its own funds, but should make allotments to the Union Committees from the amounts placed at its disposal by the District Board. For the present it would be better that the control of dispensaries should remain with the District Boards, but later on, when the scheme has developed, the dispensaries might be made over to the Circle Boards with the necessary allotments for their maintenance and repair. We are not in a position to discuss in exact detail the methods in which funds should be allotted to the different Circle Boards and Unions, but the principle should be that each Union should receive the nucleus of a fund to be spent on the objects mentioned in paragraph 138 above. We have seen it suggested that a sliding scale might be introduced, by which an increasing proportion of the Public Works cess would be made over to Union Committees to supplement local assessments made by themselves. A somewhat similar suggestion for the adoption of a sliding scale to regulate grants by District Boards to Union Committees has been made by Mr. Moberley in the note to which we have already referred. Mr. Birley proposes that, in making the allotments to Unions, the Circle Board should consider (1) the number of miles of Local Board roads contained in the several Unions, (2) the number of wells and tanks to be maintained, and (3) the extent to which a Union Committee has added to its own resources by local taxation. The methods of financing the smaller bodies will have to be dealt with by rules framed by the Local Government, and the above proposals will doubtless be considered. A Circle Board should have power to take

over the work of a particular Union, either on the application of the members of the Union Panchayat or for some special reason, such, for example, as that the Union had misapplied its funds or had failed to carry out its work in an efficient manner. It might also be advisable, as Mr. Birley has suggested, that it should be laid down that, save in the special circumstances just referred to, in no case should the Circle Board allot to a Union Committee a sum less than half its proportionate share without assigning reasons.

Establishment for Circle Boards.

146. We think that every Circle Board should have a Sub-Overseer of its own on an average pay of Rs. 40 and a conveyance allowance of Rs. 15 a month, and that each Sub-Overseer should have a peon on Rs. 7 a month. It should be understood that the Sub-Overseer may be employed under the orders of the Circle Officer on duties other than those directly connected with the work of the Circle Board.

Functions of the Sub-Overseer.

147. It has been suggested to us that the duties of the Sub-Overseer should be as follows :—

(*a*) To help Union Committees in carrying out all work going on in the Unions in connection with the repair of roads, sanitation, the improvement of water-supply, etc.

(*b*) To help Union Committees, by his knowledge of survey work, to maintain against encroachments the village paths as recorded in the Settlement maps.

(*c*) Generally, to assist the Circle Officer and the Presidents in outdoor work of various kinds, such as checking the jute-forecast figures.

We think that these are all duties which might suitably be entrusted to Sub-Overseers. The list is not exhaustive. Circumstances will vary in every district, and we need not attempt to prescribe any rigid rule. We believe that it is in the development of Union Panchayats, and in inducing them through the Circle Boards and the Circle Officer to raise funds by local taxation for works of improvement in the villages, that the only possible solution of the difficult question of improved village sanitation and village water-supply is to be found. The services of Sub-Overseers, who have had some sanitary training, would be invaluable to the panchayats in this connection, and we hope that in time this will be one of the main duties which they will be called upon to perform.

The Circle Officer.

148. We think that the Circle Officer should be a Sub-Deputy Collector with magisterial powers, and preferably an officer of one of the three lowest grades. Some witnesses would prefer that the appointment should be held by a junior Deputy Magistrate. We recognize that there is much to be said for this proposal, but it involves the larger question of the amalgamation of the Subordinate and Provincial Civil Services, which, we understand, is at present under the consideration of the Public Services Commission. Ordinarily the Circle Officer should remain in his circle for five years. He will be required to do much hard touring and he will have to live in the interior and away from

the conveniences of life in head-quarters stations. The appointment is, therefore, not likely to be a popular one amongst Sub-Deputy Collectors. We agree with the Eastern Bengal and Assam proposals, that he should be given free quarters, constructed and maintained at the expense of Government. He should also receive a local allowance of Rs. 75 per mensem, but no travelling allowance for journeys within his Circle. In water districts he should be given a local allowance of Rs. 50, and a sufficient boat allowance, which will vary according to the circumstances of the district. For example, where rivers, such as the Meghna and Padma, form the main lines of communication, a larger boat and therefore a larger allowance would be required.

The Eastern Bengal and Assam scheme contemplates that the Circle Officer should be allowed to live at the head-quarters of the district or subdivision, when the head-quarters station lies within his Circle, but we think that this would be a mistake. There is a real danger that he would regard himself as a member of the head-quarters staff, and we consider it essential that his position as an officer in no way connected with the staff at head-quarters should be emphasized. We agree with the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board that he should be essentially a peripatetic officer, constantly touring through his charge and visiting his Unions. He should tour for not less than 20 days in each month and should visit each Union at least once a month. He should not ordinarily be given cases to try, but he might be usefully employed on the revenue and executive duties enumerated in paragraph 30 (II—VII) of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board's letter of the 7th August 1911, which include the control of stamp-vendors, enquiries connected with excise, income-tax, land acquisition, agricultural loans, the state of the crops, the compilation of statistics by the panchayats and other miscellaneous duties and enquiries, which the District or Subdivisional Officer may make over to him. But his principal duties, as the Eastern Bengal Board have stated, will be the supervision of the village system in all its branches, and the maintenance of good relations between the people and all departments of the Government, especially the Police. Where there are Government Estates within his charge, the Circle Officer should either be the khas mahal officer or the khas mahal officer should be subordinate to him.

Establishment for the Circle Officer.

149. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board of Revenue sounded a note of warning against the danger of allowing the Circle Officer to develop into a court or office man, and they thought that he ought not to be assigned any duties which involve the keeping of registers or the growth of an office staff. With this opinion we fully agree. The Circle Officer must have a clerk, who should be taken from the lower grades of the Collector's establishment, and he should also have two orderly peons. The pay of the clerk, which will be met by Government, may be taken at Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 a month, and that of the peons at Rs. 7 a month each. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board rightly insisted that all communications between the Circle Officer and the Magistrate, the police, panchayats or other persons should be unofficial. The special officer working under Mr. Gupta in the Kalna Subdivision of

the Burdwan district, told us with pride that his correspondence with the Presidents had enormously increased. and that the number of letters issued and received in the year exceeded 7,000. He gave this as an illustration of the keen interest that the Presidents are taking in their work, and he told us, as he had told Mr. Gupta, that letters are now issued on any point on which the Presidents want instructions. Not unnaturally he had asked for another clerk; but his remarks clearly illustrate the danger of allowing the Circle Officer to live at head-quarters and to build up an office staff. If Presidents require instructions, the Circle Officer should be in a position to go out personally and instruct them, and this implies a manageable Circle, every part of which will be easily accessible to him. The recommendations of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board in paragraph 27 of their letter regarding the nature of the office work to be required of the Circle Officer are, we think, sound and should be adopted. It should be understood that, as in the case of the Sub-Overseer, the Circle Officer may require the clerk to do work for the Circle Board, as well as for the Circle Office, and one of his duties would be to keep the accounts of the Circle Board.

Provision of quarters for the Circle Staff.

150. We think that the Sub-Overseer, as well as the clerk, should be provided with free quarters, constructed and maintained at Government expense, for the Sub-Overseer will be employed to a considerable extent on Government work. Besides, if the District Board has to pay for the cost of acquiring land and constructing and maintaining quarters for the Sub-Overseers in the different Circles, it would not be able, at any rate at first, to finance the Union Committees. It is possible that in some places quarters might be hired, but in the majority of places they will have to be constructed. Mr. Birley suggests that ordinarily it will be convenient to acquire a single plot of land for the residence of the Circle Officer and the combined Circle and Circle Board office, as well as for the quarters of the Sub-Overseer and clerk. The orderly peons, who will be local men, could make their own arrangements, and Government need not provide them with quarters. The office should be attached to the Circle Officer's residence. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board of Revenue estimated the cost of a combined residence and office for the Circle Officer at from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 and the general opinion is that, inclusive of the cost of land acquisition and of a well or tank, Rs. 10,000 should suffice to provide quarters for each Circle Officer and his staff and a combined office for the Circle Officer and Circle Board. We have adopted this figure in our estimate of the cost of the introduction of the scheme into the Dacca district, but it is a mere approximation, and the actual cost will doubtless vary considerably in different places according to local conditions.

Necessity of a Circle System in Bengal.

151. In the foregoing paragraphs we have discussed various details of the Circle System with special reference to its introduction into the Dacca district. It will be seen that we have adopted in its broad outlines the scheme proposed by the Eastern Bengal and Assam Board of Revenue in Mr. Dixon's letter No. 1131 of the 7th August 1911. That scheme has been so carefully elaborated and is so complete in itself, that we have thought it unnecessary to go over the whole ground

again, and it should be understood that, except where we have suggested additions and modifications, we are in general agreement with the Board's proposals. There is a remarkable unanimity among officials and non-officials in favour of the scheme. Mr. Melitus has stated his conviction that "the Circle System and a reorganized Village System are not merely desirable improvements, but parts of a chain of reforms absolutely necessary for removing the weaknesses of the system of administration in Eastern Bengal." The scheme is based on the recommendations of the Decentralization Commission, and has the support of the Government of India. In view of the great political importance of the proposed reforms, we think that no further time should be lost, and that the complete scheme should be introduced at once into as many districts as possible, and extended to others as soon as officers are available.

The size of Circles and the recruitment of Circle Officers.

152. In their letter to the Government of India, No. 1403P., dated the 19th March 1913, asking for sanction to the appointment of 40 additional Sub-Deputy Collectors, the Bengal Government, while agreeing that the further development of the village system should be no longer delayed, were inclined to accept the view of Mr. Weston that from 40 to 45 Unions would form a manageable charge, and they expressed the opinion that the proposal of the Eastern Bengal Government that there should be a separate Circle Officer for every revenue thana was an unnecessarily generous allowance, and that the cost would be prohibitive. For reasons which we have already given we are convinced that it is impossible for a single officer to give to so many Unions, covering as they would an area of from 400 to 500 square miles, that close supervision and personal attention which are essential to the success of the scheme. We have shown that the failure of the chaukidari panchayats and Union Committees, and also of Mr. Savage's President system, was due to the want of adequate supervision, and we think that it would be a fatal error and a false economy to run the risk of further failure by making the area of the Circles too large. There are now 20 special Sub-Deputy Collectors available for employment as Circle Officers, and we understand that the appointment of 40 additional Sub-Deputy Collectors has been sanctioned, of whom 14 will be available this year, 14 more in 1915, and the rest in 1916. The want of officers is thus likely to be the main obstacle in the way of any rapid extension of the scheme, and we think that immediate steps should be taken to secure the recruitment of a sufficient number of additional Sub-Deputy Collectors to ensure steady progress for some years to come. The Eastern Bengal Board estimated that the number of Circles in the Province as then constituted would be about 200, and they thought that a quarter to one-third of the Circles could be held by existing Sub-Deputy Collectors converted into Circle Officers. We cannot say whether we should be justified in adopting a similar estimate for Bengal. The total number of chaukidari Unions in Bengal is 7,470 and it is probable that, if the Circle System were introduced throughout the Province, the number of Circle Officers required would be somewhere between 200 and 300.

It is impossible to foretell what the future of the scheme may be, but whatever modifications in principle or detail may be necessary, we think that there can be no question that, if any real improvement in village administration is to be expected, it can only be through the extension of the Circle System, and that for some time to come this will necessitate a steady recruitment, year by year, of a large number of additional Sub-Deputy Collectors to fill the posts of Circle Officers. We have alluded elsewhere to the favourable impression which the Settlement kanungos of Bengal have made upon our Committee. They are well educated, zealous and efficient, and thoroughly conversant with the intricacies of the land system and with the details of mofussil life. Moreover, they are accustomed to touring at all times of the year and in all kinds of country. The duties which they perform are an admirable training for the work of a Circle Officer. We think that Settlement kanungos furnish a particularly favourable field for the recruitment of the additional Sub-Deputy Collectors who will be required, if the Circle System is to be introduced throughout the Province. The proposal is likely to be welcomed by the Settlement Department, for it will give the kanungos a better chance of obtaining permanent employment in Government service than they now possess, and will help the Department in obtaining recruits. The subject of the recruitment and training of Circle Officers is touched upon in paragraphs 38 and 39 of the Eastern Bengal Board's letter of the 7th August 1911, and we agree generally with the Board's remarks. Nearly three years ago the Eastern Bengal Board recommended the immediate recruitment of 25 additional Sub-Deputy Collectors, and of about 40 more in each succeeding year, until the number required to introduce the scheme completely into all the permanently-settled districts of the Province, as then constituted, had been made up. We recognize the difficulty of making recruitments on so large a scale, but we think that a definite programme for the extension of the scheme year by year should be prepared and consistently adhered to, and that the recruitment of Sub-Deputy Collectors should be so regulated as to allow of the gradual, but steady extension of the Circle System throughout the Province. We suggest that three or four districts should be taken up every year, which would necessitate an average yearly recruitment of at least 20 additional Sub-Deputy Collectors for some years to come.

Proposed introduction of the scheme in Tippera.

153. We are not in a position to suggest a definite programme for the gradual introduction of the Circle System throughout the Province as much will depend on the action taken on our proposals for the partition of the heavier districts, and, perhaps not unnaturally, in the districts the greatest. necessity for the early introduction of the Circle System the understanding We have recommended its introduction in Dacca district. Leaving that it be accompanied by the partition of we would place Tippera, Mymensingh out of account for the present urgency in Eastern Bengal. Faridpur and Bakarganj next in order Tippera is a particularly favourable field for the introduction of the scheme, as the ground has already been prepared for it. This is one of the districts in which Mr. Savage's President scheme has been introduced; the system of serving processes through Presidents

and dafadars is in force; the district has been divided into Unions of convenient size, and five special officers have been working under Mr. Gupta, two in the Sadar Subdivision, two in Brahmanbaria and one in Chandpur. Special attention has been paid to chaukidari matters by the late District Magistrate, Mr. Rankin, and the district is thus ripe for the complete introduction of the scheme. There are 289 Unions in the district, and Mr. Rankin has prepared a scheme for the division of the district into 11 Circles, giving each Circle an average of 26 Unions. The arrangement of Circles will require some alteration, as, in order to maintain as far as possible the average of 25 Unions to each Circle, Mr. Rankin has in two or three instances split up police-stations, so that portions of the same station are comprised in two Circles. It will not be difficult to revise the Circles without affecting their number, in such a way that each shall contain entire thanas. We have recommended elsewhere that before long there should be a partition of the district of Tippera. We cannot, of course, say in what year this recommendation will be carried out, but if the new subdivision that we have proposed to relieve the unwieldy Brahmanbaria and Sadar Subdivisions is opened at an early date, we think that the introduction of the Circle System into the district need not be further delayed.

Further extension of the scheme.

154. Of the 34 special Sub-Deputy Collectors available this year for appointment as Circle Officers, 15 would be absorbed in the Dacca District and 11 in Tippera, if the immediate introduction of the scheme into these districts is decided upon. Mymensingh would probably require at least 30 Circle Officers, and we are strongly of opinion that the scheme should be introduced into this district as soon as the partition is completed. The District Magistrate of Faridpur, Mr. Woodhead, is anxious to see the scheme extended to his district, but 13 or 14 Circle Officers would be required, and that number would not be available this year. We think, however, that it would be as well to introduce the scheme into some districts in Northern and Western Bengal also. Not only is the system a very desirable improvement in itself, but it will be useful to compare how the scheme works under the varying conditions obtaining in different parts of the Province. Birbhum (five circles), Burdwan (eight circles), Howrah (five circles), and Nadia (13 circles) in Western Bengal, and Rangpur (15 to 20 circles), Bogra (three circles) and Pabna (eight circles) in Northern Bengal, are all suitable districts for the early introduction of the system. The objection has been taken that duti[illegible] will not be men in all Unions sufficiently qualified to undertake the matter [illegible] we are proposing for the panchayats, but we think that in this personal qual[illegible] is a tendency to look too much to education and too little to their service in [illegible]tions. Two of our members have spent the greater part of and constant associat[illegible]rn Bengal, and their work has brought them into direct districts. Their experien[illegible] with the villagers in the remotest parts of many to serve on the panchayats [illegible] that in every Union suitable men can be found qualifications, can be trusted unde[illegible] although not posseseing high educational great deal of useful work for their villa[illegible] mpathetic guidance and control to do a true of other parts of Bengal, and that [illegible] We believe that this is equally can be found. We suggest that the system be [illegible] over the Province such men [illegible]roduced into the Birbhum

district at once, and be extended to the other districts that we have mentioned, as officers are available. We think that, if our proposals are accepted, arrangements should be made for starting work next cold weather in the Dacca, Tippera and Birbhum districts. Land will have to be acquired for the quarters of the Circle Officers and their staffs, buildings will have to be constructed, and preliminary arrangements made. The Eastern Bengal and Assam Board in paragraph 76 of their letter of the 7th August 1911 noted three stages of progress in the introduction of the Circle scheme, the first being taken up with the revision of Union boundaries and lists of panchayats; the transfer of the statistical and other non-police duties, mentioned in paragraph 32 of the Board's letter from the police to the Circle Officer and panchayats would be effected in the second, while the third and last stage could only be entered upon after the necessary legislation had been completed. The districts, to which we have recommended the immediate extension of the scheme, are ready for its introduction up to the second stage, but the adoption of the revised local self-government system, the amalgamation of the functions of the Chaukidari Panchayats and the Union Committees and the constitution of the village courts must await legislation. There will be sufficient work for the Circle Officers to do for the first year in acquainting themselves with their charges, in organizing the panchayats, and in instructing them how to carry out the police, chaukidari and executive functions which are being entrusted to them. We see no reason why the introduction of the scheme in some of the districts named by us should be delayed.

Distribution of the cost of the scheme.

155. Turning now to the cost of the proposed reforms, we think it desirable that the introduction of the scheme should not be associated at the outset with any great increase of village taxation. The substitution of Circle Boards for Local Boards will entail some additional expenditure on local funds, in the way of increased establishment, but while we hope that the introduction of the Circle System will add to the efficiency of the District Boards, the primary object of the scheme is the improvement of the general administration. As the Eastern Bengal Board have observed, not only the general administration, but police work also will gain in the end from better relations and closer co-operation between the district authorities and the people, and the power of direct interference that the police will lose, will be more than compensated by the voluntary assistance of the judicial It is especially their functions of self-government and the ease their functions, that will give vitality to the panchayats and very reluctant power of usefulness to the District Officers, and we District Boards in that any heavy initial expenditure should fall on reforms. Such expenconnection with the introduction of the propo detract from the usefulditure could not fail to diminish the funds it a reasonable compromise, ness of the Union Committees. We th the initial cost of the reforms therefore, that Government should and provide the buildings that required. We suggest also that the maintenance of these buildings should be a charge on Government, the cost of the increased establishment and all other recurring expenditure

incidental to the purely municipal portions of the proposed reforms being met by the District Boards.

Cost of introducing Circle System into Dacca District.

156. In paragraphs 40 to 46 of their letter of the 7th August 1911, the Eastern Bengal Board have worked out the approximate cost of the introduction of their proposed scheme in the three subdivisions of Barisal Sadar, Natore and Chandpur, and from the figures thus arrived at they calculated that the total cost of the introduction of the Circle System throughout the Province, as then constituted, would have amounted to about 12 lakhs initial expenditure and 6 lakhs recurring. In the Eastern Bengal scheme, provision was made for an average of three rest-houses at a cost of Rs. 500 each at convenient centres in the interior of each Circle. The proposal had originated with Mr. Hughes-Buller, then Inspector-General of Police of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and it was intended that the rest-houses should be used, not only by Circle Officers, but also by Sub-Inspectors of Police and Excise and other officers halting on duty in the interior of thanas. We have no doubt that, for the reasons given in paragraph 34 of the Eastern Bengal Board's letter, the provision of such rest-houses would be very useful to touring officers of all departments, but they are not a necessary adjunct to the Circle scheme, and we have, therefore, omitted them from our calculations. We have also omitted any reference to the enhanced pay of the dafadars, as that is a measure of police reform and is no part of our proposals for the reorganization of the Village System. We have taken the annual cost on account of each Circle Officer at Rs. 1,920, according to the calculation in paragraph 10 of the Bengal Government letter to the Government of India, No. 1403P. of the 19th March 1913. For furniture and contingencies we have adopted the figures taken by the Eastern Bengal Board.

157. On the above calculation, and assuming that in seven Circles the Circle Officers will require a special boat allowance, the total estimate of the non-recurring and recurring expenditure to be borne by Government in connection with the introduction of the scheme into the Dacca district will be as follows :—

INITIAL NON-RECURRING EXPENDITURE.

	Rs.
Quarters and offices for each Circle Officer and his staff ...	8,000
Cost of land acquisition, raising plinth, etc.	2,000
Office furniture	250
Total for each Circle ...	10,250
Total for 15 Circles ...	1,53,750

ANNUAL RECURRING EXPENDITURE.

	Rs.
Pay of the Sub-Deputy Collector	1,920
Pay of clerk at Rs. 35 per mensem	420
Pay of two orderly peons at Rs. 7 per mensem ...	168
Cost of upkeep of buildings (at 5 per cent. on Rs. 8,000)	400
Contingencies and repair of furniture	250
Total ...	3,158
For 15 Circles	47,370
Local allowance of the Circle Officer in 8 Circles at Rs. 75 *per mensem*	7,200
Local allowance of the Circle Officers in 7 Circles at Rs. 50 *per mensem*	4,200
Boat allowance for 7 Circle Officers at Rs. 30 each *per mensem*	2,520
Remuneration of Secretaries of 349 Unions at Rs. 4 each *per mensem*	16,752
Total ...	78,042

We have included the pay of the 15 Circle Officers, amounting in all to Rs. 37,800 a year, but so far as the Dacca district and the other districts to which the system may be extended this year are concerned, there will be no extra expenditure on this account, as the Sub-Deputy Collectors are already in Government service. The estimates do not pretend to be more than rough calculations, and in some places it might be possible to effect savings in various directions. For example, the Eastern Bengal Board proposed to dispense with the services of four Sub-Deputy Collectors on general duty in the three subdivisions in which they wished to introduce their scheme, and Mr. Rankin says that he could dispense with two khas mahal tahsildars and a muharrir. In the majority of districts a special boat allowance will not be required. No doubt a reduction in the cost to Government could also be effected by substituting cheaper quarters for the Circle Officer and his staff, or by requiring them to pay rent. It has, however, to be borne in mind that the work of the Circle Officers will be hard, that they will have to live in remote and often unhealthy places, away from the amenities of life at head-quarters stations. If willing work is to be expected of the Circle Officers and their staffs, they must be treated with consideration and comfortably housed. It would in our opinion be a mistake to economise in this direction, and we agree with the Eastern Bengal Board of Revenue in thinking that any considerable reduction in expenditure on the residences of the Circle Officer and his staff could only be made at the cost of efficiency.

Cost of a Single Circle.

158. Roughly speaking, then, it may be said that the cost of introducing the Circle System in the Dacca district will amount on the average to about Rs. 10,250 initial expenditure in each Circle, and Rs. 5,203 a year recurring, inclusive of the pay and allowances of the Circle Officer. If we omit the special boat allowance, the annual recurring expenditure will be approximately Rs. 5,175 for each Circle.

That, we think, is a sufficiently close estimate for present calculations, and the same figure may be adopted for other districts. More accurate estimates can be prepared after practical experience of the working of the System has been obtained.

Cost to District Boards.

159. The additional cost to the District Board, if our proposals are adopted, will be as follows :—

ANNUAL RECURRING EXPENDITURE.

	Rs.
Sub-Overseer on Rs. 40 a month *plus* Rs. 15 travelling allowance	660
Peon on Rs. 7 a month	84
Total ...	744
Total for 15 circles ...	11,160
Deduct the following savings in four Local Boards:—	
1 Clerk on Rs. 40 a month and 3 clerks on Rs. 35 each a month	1,740
2 Sub-Overseers on Rs. 49-8 each a month and 2 on Rs. 30 each and travelling allowance of Rs. 20 each	2,868
8 Peons on Rs. 9 a month each	864
Total ...	5,472
Total additional recurring cost to the District Board *per annum*	5,688

Thus the average increase in the annual recurring expenditure of the District Boards on account of the introduction of the Circle System, on the lines we propose, would amount to about Rs. 380 for each Circle. There will be no initial expenditure.

Necessity for more inspection bungalows.

160. In connection with our proposals for the introduction of a Circle System and the necessity of close and constant supervision of its working by District and Subdivisional Officers, several witnesses have brought to our notice the inconvenience to which touring officers are put, especially in Eastern Bengal, owing to the inadequate provision of inspection bungalows in the interior of their districts. The question is one of considerable administrative importance, and we feel ourselves justified in mentioning it here, as it has an indirect bearing on the working of the reforms which we have proposed in the foregoing paragraphs of this Chapter. The Collector of Dacca, Mr. Birley, has stated that the absence of inspection bungalows is largely responsible for the unsatisfactory touring which is done in the Dacca district. He points out that the increased use of tents does not provide a remedy, not only because camping in tents is impossible for the greater part of the year, but also because there are very few camping grounds, the carriage of tents is exceedingly costly, while in many parts of the district there are no carts to be had at all, notably in the south of the

Sadar and the whole of the Munshiganj Subdivisions. In Mr. Birley's opinion there can be no question but that the provision of bungalows would result in an improvement of the administration in all its branches, and in a more intimate knowledge of the people and of their needs, for, as he observes, it is obvious that an officer who stays for five or six days at an inspection bungalow and visits places in its neighbourhood is much more accessible than an officer whose head-quarters during his tour is a boat or launch. Other officers have corroborated this view. Hitherto the accepted principle appears to have been that it is the duty of the District Board to provide inspection bungalows; but the Boards are not unnaturally reluctant to incur heavy expenditure on account of bungalows which are used far less by the Board's officials than by other classes of Government officers. Nor can we ourselves see any valid reason why the District Boards should pay for facilitating the tours of the District and Subdivisional Officers when not engaged on District Board work, of Police Officers, of the Inspector of Schools when inspecting High Schools, of the District Sub-Registrar, of the Excise Deputy Collector and of many other officers who make use of inspection bungalows. It is in the Eastern Bengal districts that, from an administrative point of view, the necessity for such bungalows is the greatest, and it is unfortunately in these districts that they are most conspicuous by their absence, owing to the fact that there are no Government roads and canals necessitating the construction of Government bungalows. In some districts, such as Dacca, Mymensingh and Bakarganj, there are no Government inspection bungalows at all. In Dacca the District Board has only four, of which two are at subdivisional head-quarters, while of the remaining two bungalows one is said to be uninhabitable. In the Faridpur district there are two inspection bungalows maintained by Government, both at the head-quarters of subdivisions, and eight maintained by the District Board, of which only two, according to the Collector, are fit to live in. There is no inspection bungalow in the Madaripur Subdivision outside the subdivisional head-quarters. There are similar complaints from other districts also. If our proposals for the introduction of a Circle System are accepted, the work of the Circle Officers and of the Union Committees will require the close and the constant supervision of the District and Subdivisional Officers, and it is very desirable that, at least in the Eastern districts, there should, as far as possible, be an inspection bungalow at the head-quarters of each Circle. The District Boards cannot be expected to carry out such a programme. We think that the construction and maintenance of these bungalows should be undertaken by Government and not, as at present, left entirely to the District Boards.

Disposal of Public Works Cess pending introduction of Circle System.

161. The proposals that we have put forward for the adoption of a Circle System are based on the assumption that the whole area of a district will be divided up into Unions, and that a large proportion of the Public Works cess will be available for distribution among the different Union Committees. This will form the nucleus of a fund for each Union, which, it is expected, the Committee will be able to supplement, either by voluntary contributions or by local taxation under section 118C of the Local Self-Government Act. If this object is to be secured, it follows that the Public Works cess should not be given over to all District Boards unconditionally, in anticipation of the introduction of the Circle System. It will be some years before the System can be extended

to all the districts in the Province, and, if the Public Works cess is now transferred unconditionally to all District Boards, it is extremely probable that, in the meanwhile, some Boards will largely increase their recurring expenditure on establishments and in other directions, and find themselves unable, when the time comes for the introduction of the Circle System, to afford the funds necessary for financing the Union Committees in the way we propose. We merely desire to draw attention to the danger, and it must be left to the Government to decide how it is to be avoided. In paragraph 3 (9) of their circular letter No. 288-301 C.D., dated the 1st March 1913, the Government of India observed that, while it would be left to each Local Government to determine the specific purposes to which the increased income of the Boards should be devoted, a substantial portion of the increase should be set apart for the improvement of rural water-supply, for anti-malarial measures, and generally for the sanitation of villages and small towns. The Local Government have thus been given the power to impose conditions as to the utilisation of the Public Works cess, and we understand that the question whether any and, if so, what conditions should be imposed in future years, is at present under their consideration. We should have liked to propose that the transfer to any District Board of the Public Works cess should be withheld until the Circle System has been introduced in the district, the proceeds of the cess being in the meanwhile devoted to the initial expenses in connection with the extension of the system throughout the Province. Whether this is still possible is a matter which we leave for the decision of Government. The only alternative appears to us to be, that the transfer to a District Board of its share of the Public Works cess should be made conditional on the whole or a certain portion being available for financing the Union Committees, whenever the Circle System is extended to the district; but the means for making this condition effective must also be decided by the Government.

PART IV.

Education.

CHAPTER VIII.

Anglo-Vernacular Schools.

Educational conditions in Bengal.

162. In no respect do conditions in Bengal differ more widely from those obtaining elsewhere in India than in respect of Anglo-Vernacular schools. While in other Provinces these institutions exist almost entirely in towns or at the headquarters of districts, here they also abound in villages; while elsewhere they owe their existence mainly to Government or to local funds and occasionally to individual munificence, here they have been and are being principally established by private effort; while elsewhere they are on the whole effectively controlled by Government; in Bengal, Government, in consequence of the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission of 1882, adopted an attitude of practical non-interference in regard to private enterprise.

Two examples will illustrate the enormous differences which distinguish Bengal from the rest of Upper India and which stultify so many generalisations. The Madaripur Subdivision of the remote rural district of Faridpur contains 15 private High Schools, each with an attendance of about 400 boys. It further holds 19 private Middle English Schools. The Munshiganj Subdivision of the Dacca District is even more richly endowed with private High Schools. But in the whole of the United Provinces there are only 14 High and 15 Middle English Schools away from district headquarters. Five of the former and four of the latter are maintained by Government or local funds. The figures of attendance for all but two of the entire number are far below the average Bengal figures.

Reasons for and some results of these conditions.

163. The presence of a multitude of English schools flung far and wide over the Presidency is mainly due to the dominating influence of Calcutta, which has been termed the most Europeanised city in the East and has long been the centre of legal, educational and commercial activities. Outside it there are few towns in Bengal of considerable size or importance. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the Bengali Hindu *bhadralok*, or clerical classes and small landholders, live largely in villages and retain their ancestral homesteads, even when they serve or work elsewhere. Under such circumstances they often leave their children at home in charge of relatives; and, when active life is over for themselves, they frequently return to their ancestral villages. Wherever they settle or leave their children, they want Anglo-Vernacular schools and are ready to pay for them. Lord Curzon once said: "I am not sure that if a vote were taken among the intelligent middle classes of this country, they would not sooner see money devoted to secondary education than to any other educational object. The reason is, that it is the basis of all professional or industrial employment in India." The difference between the Bengali *bhadralok* and the small landlords and middle class of other Provinces of Upper India is that the former are more enterprising, more intelligent and far more ready to put their hands into their pockets to secure educational advantages. They act largely under

the influence of a great city to which all paths of advancement are considered to lead. The result is that, with the strong encouragement of Government, private enterprise has sown English education broadcast among a clever, keen, excitable people. Even the cultivating classes are now becoming impressed with its advantages. This extended knowledge of English, in times like the present, must necessarily have produced, and will continue to produce, some degree of social and political unrest; and it is natural that this unrest should affect the rising generation. But what was unnatural was the particularly sinister and prominent part played by Bengal colleges and schools throughout the recent troubles, a part which, we have reason to think, is not entirely played out. "When did you hear of educated people turning dacoits and robbers?" said an old Muhammadan servant of Government to us. He might have added: "When did you hear of boys leaving their schools to take part in systematic dacoity?" There have been various instances of this in Eastern Bengal. Most people will agree that there must be something seriously wrong in the system which produces such phenomena. The fact is that the diffusion of English education in Bengal demanded considerably more from Government than it received. Private effort, however meritorious, required careful and attentive steering; but the Education Commission of 1882 did not realise this, not having learnt by bitter experience the dangers of spreading among an Eastern people a Western education, cut down to the lowest possible cost, with no regard to religious training and with little regard to moral training.

164. In this Presidency nine Government colleges educate about 3,000 students. Twenty-five private colleges educate about 10,000 students. All these institutions are fed by 527 High Schools, 38 of which are maintained by Government, four by local funds, 208 are aided by Government or local funds, and 277 are unaided. All these High Schools, although sometimes pecuniarily assisted by Government, which provides the inspecting staff and scholarships, are controlled by the Syndicate of the Calcutta University, which has the power of "recognising" them as qualified to present candidates for the Matriculation examination, the sole goal of youthful scholastic ambition in Bengal. These High Schools are partly recruited from 1,295 Middle English Schools, of which four are maintained by Government, 43 by local funds, 775 are aided and 473 are unaided. The above figures give the position on the 31st of March 1913. There have apparently been increases since. The Education Department has not been able to furnish us with figures of unrecognised Anglo-Vernacular schools, but reports that there were, in March 1913, 446 private boys' schools of all kinds, educating 17,992 pupils and not conforming to departmental rules. There are some signs that any stiffening in the requirements for "recognition" will cause unrecognised schools to increase; and they are increasing materially in the Dacca and Mymensingh districts. There are a few "National schools," legacies from the boycott movement. The Director considers that their extinction is only a question of time. We paid a visit to one in the town of Jhalukati in the Bakarganj District. The Municipal Chairman informed us that the attendance was now only 25 or 30; but we found about 60

boys there, and we were told that 90 names were on the roll. The school did not impress us as moribund. The instruction in drawing and carpentry, which we saw, seemed good. We were shown a drawing of Arabinda Ghose and were subsequently informed, on unimpeachable authority, that only a short time before Romesh Chandra Acharjya, sentenced to 12 years' transportation in the Barisal conspiracy case, had stayed at this school. Excepting National schools, all Anglo-Vernacular institutions are increasing in numbers; and almost all which we visited were crammed with boys, especially in East Bengal, where the Muhammadans are coming into the educational field in rising strength.

High Schools.

165. High Schools may be termed the pivot of Anglo-Vernacular education. They supply the Colleges with students and receive boys from the Middle Schools under transfer-certificates. If the High Schools are well regulated, desirable institutions, both the Colleges and Middle Schools will benefit. But being as they are under the control of a body of gentlemen, ordinarily resident in Calcutta by the conditions of their appointment, the majority of the private High Schools of Bengal are not well regulated. Studies are a hard grind of preparation under generally incompetent teachers for a single written examination; buildings are frequently bad; class rooms are commonly overcrowded; games are restricted; life is dull and uninteresting. For the crowds of boys, who come to some High Schools from distant villages, there is hardly more than a pretence of satisfactory boarding arrangements. Unless so fortunate as to find their way to a few special institutions like the Oxford Mission hostels or the Bell Islamia boarding house at Barisal, they live in such places as Dacca, Barisal, Comilla, exposed to the worst influences at the most impressionable period of their lives, away from their homes, under nominal and careless guardians. Even if there be a hostel, it affords only a small part of the accommodation required, and is too often badly housed and inefficiently supervised. Out of school-hours the boys practically do what they like. They wander about and spend their time as they please in towns where bad influences are concentrated. Some play games; but these are generally the minority, and of the supervision that an English school-boy receives out of school-hours there is hardly any. The consequences of such arrangements are what might be expected. Every effort is being made by Government to improve the general situation by lavish grants; and here and there much has been or is being done. But, as the Government of India have observed, qualitative improvement is retarded by the length and expense of the programme; and the system which has produced such a state of things remains unaltered. Even now Matriculation remains the only goal of almost every boy's school career; even now control of High Schools is not with Government. It is with these institutions, rather than with the numerous Middle English Schools (which are bad enough, but can be improved with comparative ease when once High Schools are properly regulated), that this chapter is mainly concerned.

The young Bengali.

166. Those who know him best agree that the Bengali student or school-boy is, under favourable circumstances, hard-working, well-behaved and readily amenable to discipline. In the words of an experienced witness, "he does not mind being kept in order." In contact with

teachers who make a conscience of their work, have time to give their pupils individual attention, and are not dependent on parental caprices, he is responsive to intellectual appeal and personal influence. Mr. Archbold, Principal of the Dacca College, told us :—"It is marvellous how good an Indian student really is, when the slackness of discipline is considered. The whole mind of an ordinary Bengali student is set on his work. In all my time here (four years) I never had a day's trouble with one boy." The Principal of the Hostel of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta said :—"Relations between the students and the members of the Mission are excellent. There is no insubordination. Discipline is very good. Whatever racial feeling the students acquire they get from the newspapers." At the same time the Bengali youth is emotional, uncritical and liable to be carried away by bursts of fanaticism. Of this there have been many well-known instances, and we would invite attention to paragraph 17, Chapter II of this report. The highly injurious influence that an inflammatory press has exercised over the young generation was emphasised by the late Sir Herbert Risley when introducing the Press Act of 1910; there is still a section of society which misses no opportunity of endeavouring to graft its own inveterate discontent on others, and from time to time seditious publications are circulated which tend to excite impressionable youth.

Long-standing defects in his educational surroundings. Their history.

167. Unfortunately, as we have already shown, the majority of Bengali boys pursue their studies in establishments where there is little to counteract injurious influences. There is, on the contrary, a good deal to strengthen them. Lord Curzon's Government pointed out ten years ago that the remedy for the lack of religious instruction lies in the influence of carefully selected and trained teachers, in the maintenance of a high standard of discipline, and above all in the association of teachers and pupils in the common interests of daily life. The present condition of many Anglo-Vernacular schools in Bengal is the negation of all these things; and sometimes the association of teachers with pupils has been for seditious and criminal purposes. In seeking for the causes of this, one soon becomes aware of long-standing defects of system. It will be convenient to review their history with effect from the years 1882-83, when the Indian Education Commission, in reporting upon the state of education then existing, made a careful enquiry into the measures which had been taken in pursuance of the East India Company's despatch of 1854, and submitted detailed proposals for carrying out the principles of that despatch.

Thirty years ago.

168. The members of the Bengal Educational Committee and the Indian Education and Public Service Commissions of the 'eighties met under conditions widely different from those of the present day. Learners of English were then far fewer. Politics were less generally absorbing and had not invaded education. The Committee wrote :—"It was judged rightly that the knowledge imbibed with, and the intelligence evoked by, English education, however incompatible they might be with blind belief in wrong theories of Science and History, could not sap the foundations of a morality which was in essentials common to pupil and teacher, and that the ties which bound fast the ruler to the ruled

would, under the system of education introduced, become identified with those which bound the disciple to the master." The Committee considered that the grant-in-aid policy, initiated by the Court of Directors in 1854, had proved an entire success. Of High Schools, for one maintained by Government, there were three, two aided and one unaided, supported by private effort. Of English Middle Schools, Government maintained only a small fraction. The result of English education was that numerous associations had been formed for the promotion of objects of social and national importance, many of which did "a great amount of political good." Although the Committee had moved among the contentions engendered by the Ilbert Bill, there was no presentiment of the evils which would one day come from cheap, inferior, ill-disciplined schools. On the contrary, extreme confidence was manifested in all existing tendencies. Those who had displayed such keenness in establishing schools might safely be left to manage them. The education that practically meant mere cramming for examination should be widely extended without let or hindrance. Government should withdraw as soon as possible from the direct management of schools.

169. These findings were endorsed by the Indian Education Commission, with the reservation that, whatever withdrawal there might be from direct supervision of education, there should be none from indirect but efficient control. As, however, this reservation was coupled with the injunction that private schools were only to be interfered with "in cases of extreme necessity," and was followed by a determination (inspired by the Public Service Commission) to dispense with British inspecting agency as far as possible, it amounted to little more than a pious aspiration.

The Committee entertained the hope that extended English education would, following the lines of popular education in England, lead to increased industrialism and extended avenues of employment. They recommended the institution of school courses alternative to the Entrance course and including subjects selected with a view to the requirements of an industrial or commercial career. But this recommendation, although endorsed by the Indian Commission, came to nothing. The practical result of Committee and Commissions was a devolution of educational control to the Calcutta University and to School Committees, for which Bengal was ill-prepared.

170. The mistakes in the policy adopted rapidly became apparent. This is obvious from a letter addressed by the Government of India to all Local Governments on December 31st, 1887, and from a Resolution issued by the same Government on the 17th August 1889. Tendencies "unfavourable to discipline and favourable to irreverence" had been noticed in the rising generation; the lack of efficient teachers had been severely felt. The Governor-General in Council desired to give emphatic expression to the view that it was "of little use to spend money on schools where the teachers are either inefficient, or unable to maintain discipline or a healthy moral tone." The Government of India recommended various remedial measures to the Local Governments; but to carry out these required money which was not forthcoming. So little was done that

Subsequent developments.

even now, 24 years later, we find the Director of Public Instruction saying: "The proper training of teachers and inspectors is the great desideratum. There are two training colleges now, in Dacca and Calcutta. At present the majority of teachers, even in Government schools, are untrained, and in private schools hardly any are trained."

171. Private English schools were thus left to develop largely as they pleased; and they grew and multiplied all over Bengal, particularly in the *bhadralok* villages of the Eastern districts, far remote from the Calcutta University, which was supposed to control them. English education was the avenue to Government service and professional employment; and the hereditary followers of these methods of livelihood established English education wherever they went. They required for their children instruction which would procure an income; moral influences and the training of character they hardly thought of in connection with school-teaching. They placed their schools under Managing Committees of small ideas; and these Committees, cutting down the cost of buildings and the salaries of teachers to the lowest possible level, provided the cheapest education to be had. The University recognised with very little discrimination; and even if a school were so unfortunate as to be rejected, its scholars presented themselves for matriculation as private candidates.

The failure of Lord Curzon's reforms in Bengal.

172. It was not until the time of Lord Curzon that the Government of India again took up the question of secondary education. Lord Curzon realised that this was not a matter that should be left any longer entirely to Committees and University Syndicates. It was a great national concern, "the key to employment, the condition of all national advance and prosperity, and the sole stepping-stone for every class of the community to higher things." It was a social and political, even more than an intellectual demand. He stated that in secondary education carefully selected and trained teachers were all important, and that adequate inspection was equally necessary; next came reform in buildings and courses of study. He left the power of making regulations for recognition for the Matriculation examination in the hands of the Universities; but, in addressing Local Governments, he expressed the view that, while the Syndicates would frame the regulations, they should recognise and control on information placed before them by the Educational Department. He recommended the adoption of a modern or industrial side and the institution of a school-leaving-certificate examination, to be conducted by the Department of Public Instruction and to form a culminating all-round test of the secondary school course. He insisted on the indefeasible responsibility of Government in regard to private institutions, whether aided or not. He declared that admission to the Matriculation examination must in future be confined to candidates from recognised schools and *bonâ fide* private candidates. He earnestly appealed to the co-operation of "all patriotic Indians," pointing out that "it is their people that we are working for and their future we are trying to safeguard and enlarge." But Lord Curzon left India, his work unfinished, and the reforms which he designed for secondary education came to practically nothing in Bengal. Congress orators proclaimed that the policy of Government was to limit the spread

of the knowledge of English and to keep back the educated classes. This doctrine was accepted by many persons incapable of appreciating Lord Curzon's real objects. It largely prevailed, and the results may be gathered from the Bengal educational reports of subsequent years and from other depressing correspondence.

173. No school-leaving-certificate course was instituted in Bengal; but in 1901 the Department of Public Instruction had introduced B classes in a few High Schools for boys. These were alternative to the first two classes, and were designed as a more modern and useful training than the purely literary syllabus of the Matriculation. But there was a dearth of qualified teachers and the classes were unpopular, as boys could not through them secure admission to colleges, but only to Technical and Engineering schools; and the necessity of making an early choice of a career for his son does not appeal to the Bengali parent. The low standard of the Matriculation examination is a strong counter-attraction, and the B classes have generally been regarded as a last resort for boys who were certain to fail for the Matriculation. They have been so scantily attended as to be hardly worth keeping up.

Recognition and control of High Schools remained with the University, although the cost of grants, scholarships and the inspecting staff continued to be borne by the Local Government. The regulations for recognition were the subject of much discussion and were only sanctioned by the Government of India in 1906. It was decided that High Schools should apply direct for recognition. On receiving the application, the Syndicate could call for a report from a competent inspector, usually the Government Circle Inspector. They could delegate any qualified person to make special or annual reports; reports from the Circle Inspector would be submitted through the Director of Public Instruction, who might and probably would remark thereon. That officer was thus liable to see his recommendation rejected on the advice of some far less competent counsellor. From Resolution No. 600 of the 11th August 1906, which sanctioned the regulations, it appears that the Government of India had abandoned the theory of their own indefeasible responsibility for the proper control of private schools, and considered that the University alone was legally competent to deal with these institutions if unaided. That body was, therefore, enjoined to correct certain grave defects in the rising generation of students and to grapple with evils which, if allowed to continue, were "bound to react injuriously on the moral and intellectual growth of the nation."

174. At the end of the quinquennium 1902-07, the Director of Education in India reported that the two Bengal Governments had stated that the condition of secondary education in their charges was deplorable. In fact, many poverty-stricken, ill found, badly managed and disciplined Anglo-Vernacular schools in both Provinces, and especially the Eastern, had fallen an easy prey to seditious agitation. From the latter Province it was reported that "in some cases the boys attended political meetings and took part in political demonstrations in defiance of the authorities. . . . . In some they assaulted or insulted those who did not agree with the political leaders as to the expedience of the Partition; while in

The fruits of this failure.

others they organized themselves into *swadeshi* gangs and picketed the bazar to prevent the sale of foreign goods." Instances of such conduct were not by any means confined to pupils in private schools and colleges; but it was these institutions that pre-eminently exhibited a seditious spirit, seldom checked and frequently encouraged by teachers. The records of the Criminal Investigation Department, Intelligence Branch, show that within the years 1906-09 boycott and picketing cases numbered 557 in Eastern Bengal and Assam, and that "in the great majority of these, probably 75 per cent. school-boys and teachers were concerned." A report communicated to the Government of India by letter No. 935-T.C., dated the 21st February 1906, from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, throws abundant light on this subject.

Resulting Correspondence.

175. On the 10th October 1906, the Government of India, seeing that secondary education was loudly demanding attention, called on all Local Governments for programmes of improvement. The two Bengal Governments, after united deliberations, replied in 1908, stating that Anglo-Vernacular schools had grown up indiscriminately without adequate control, direction or assistance, and that the majority were badly managed, staffed and equipped, incapable of providing sound education. Their rescue "from their present degraded condition" was "one of the most urgent of our social and political problems." Comprehensive reforms were proposed. It was pointed out that, however desirable it might be to raise the standard of Government schools, so that they might serve as models, these educated only a small fraction of the boys in the Provinces, and that little would be gained by their efficient teaching if the great majority of schools did not heed the models, but remained as bad as they were. It was suggested that Government and the University should together decide on a scale of establishment for privately-managed High Schools, which, though not of a high order, would be reasonably efficient; and that the University should insist on its adoption as a preliminary to recognition, three-fourths of the additional expense thereby incurred being borne by Government, and one-fourth being found by the local authorities, either from increased fees or from subscriptions. A scale of establishment was also prepared for Middle English Schools, of which the cost would be distributed on the same principle as the additional cost of High Schools. Other reforms were proposed, among them a system of District Inspectors; also improved buildings and new hostels. Apparently the old proposal for a gradual but general introduction of properly trained and certificated teachers had come to be regarded as impracticable.

Lack of funds prevented immediate response from the Government of India to the 1908 proposals, which were carefully reconsidered and resubmitted later on.

General improvement still delayed.

176. The quinquennium of 1907-12 had commenced with a special inspection of all High Schools under direction from the University, but the Provincial reports for that period show that little material improvement had been effected in Anglo-Vernacular private schools. The majority of the teachers were still incompetent; there were incessant

changes of staff, to the prejudice of discipline and progress. Higher posts were generally held by candidates for the Bar, who left when they passed their law examinations. The introduction of a school-leaving-certificate examination seemed impossible in Eastern Bengal, for its success presupposed a co-operation betweeen teachers and Inspectors which did not exist. Hostels were few; but discipline had improved, owing to the subsidence of political agitation.

What, however, did not appear from these reports was, that the efforts of the enemies of Government to attract recruits from colleges and schools during the quinquennium had proved singularly successful. The utilization of schools as boycotting agencies had equipped the enemies of Government with a far-reaching machinery for disseminating a poison which has ruined many a young life and brought misery to many a home. There can be no doubt that some of those who first used schools as centres of political agitation stood aghast when they saw the later results of their action. The efforts of Government had failed to prevent this, for power mainly lay with the Syndicate, whose views of the situation and as to discipline and propriety were by no means always identical with those of the Education Department, and the authorities of various schools were able to play off with success the first against the second. The Department saw what the schools were really like. The Syndicate did not.

Events of 1913. Remedial measures on a large scale proclaimed: imminent need for them.

177. The Government of India's Resolution of 21st February 1913 dealt with education in India as a whole, including Anglo-Vernacular education. Grants-in-aid were to be made more elastic and were to be largely increased, so that aided institutions might keep pace with Government schools. Private hostel accommodation was to be provided; hygiene and supervision over games were to receive careful attention. The old ideal, that eventually no teacher must be allowed to teach without a certificate that he is qualified to do so, was again proclaimed; and Local Governments were desired to examine and enlarge their schemes for training teachers of all grades. School final or leaving certificate examinations were to be instituted as soon as practicable; and the doctrine that the conduct of such examinations should be regarded as altogether outside the functions of the University was re-stated and emphasised.

Later on in the same year the disclosures of the Barisal conspiracy case (paragraph 17 of Chapter II) occupied the special attention of the Government of Bengal. It had been definitely established that a scheme was in progress for capturing boys reading in Anglo-Vernacular schools, and for thus introducing into colleges youths whose minds had been soaked in revolutionary ideas. Schools were to be brought under a "District Organisation Scheme," which would provide for the introduction of masters imbued with anti-British doctrines and for the gradual initiation of selected boys. Some remarkable correspondence on the subject was produced during the Barisal trial.

Government convened a conference of responsible officers. Important questions were raised and are still *sub judice;* but the present position is that the Calcutta University continues to recognise the High Schools and to dominate their courses of study.

The present situation from an expert point of view.

178. We have now discussed the important stages in the history for the past 30 years of secondary English education in Bengal. The views of experts as to its present condition may be gathered from passages in the Government of India's last quinquennial review, where stress is laid on the overcrowding of English schools (often of a very inferior type), on the rush for the literary courses, and on the necessarily wooden and lifeless system of testing the crowds of candidates for Matriculation.

The Hon'ble Mr. Hornell, Director of Public Instruction, has described the general effect of English education, as at present imparted, in the following terms :—"The problem is in the main a psychological one. It is the effect of soul-destroying methods and of the entire lack of any possibility of intellectual stimulus or emotional appeal acting upon the emotional nature of the Bengali boy. The root-cause is undoubtedly to be found in the fact that the whole of secondary education, so called, is, and has always been organised with no other object than the passing of boys through the Calcutta University Matriculation Examination.

"This statement requires no modification in view of the fact that a considerable number of boys read in the High School classes and never get to the Matriculation at all. Also that a considerable number of those who pass the Matriculation get no further."

Elsewhere Mr. Hornell has expressed his strong opinion "that in the improvement of secondary schools lies the only real remedy against sedition and crime."

Mr. Stapleton, Inspector of Schools in the Dacca Division since 1905, told us on the 4th March :—"I have about 130 High Schools under me, recognised and unrecognised. Unrecognised schools start and have to be argued with, and further money extracted from promoters. Sometimes the efforts fail; but the school goes on (two such have gone on for eight or nine years) educating candidates up to class IX and sending them on elsewhere. Within these two months or so, six new schools have been started. They commence starting them at the beginning of the year. These schools all fill up with boys. I cannot make out where they all come from. Schools are started with absolutely nothing to speak of in the way of appliances. Promoters run up a few sheds, get together a scratch staff, and advertise that they are open. Thereupon the bad boys from other schools get admission. If the school is badly managed, the boys get promotion at once. If it is not badly managed, the boys are pretty certain of being given easier promotion at the end of the year than they would get in their former schools. This is a state of affairs which has got absolutely beyond us, for all these schools, with practically no exception, are full. . . . . A great mischief is the unrecognised schools. They are increasing because of the comparative stiffening up in this Division, and the demand from the population for English education. They are now about 30" (in the Dacca Division).

The bad teaching of English in High Schools, the unsatisfactory results of University control, the poverty and depressing prospects of the scholastic profession, have been attested by various expert witnesses. We agree with the opinion expressed by many educationalists that more

enlightened instruction in Economics is eminently desirable. At present many college students are early impressed with the idea that India is being exploited by the British for their own purposes and drained of her natural wealth. This idea may and often does exercise an unfortunate influence on their after-lives.

Our own impressions; Overcrowding; Boarding arrangements Discipline.

179. We have seen a number of Anglo-Vernacular schools and recorded notes of each visit. We propose to summarise our personal impressions, which illustrate the views stated in paragraph 165 of this chapter.

Almost all the private schools were overcrowded, and their rooms, often mere sheds, were dirty and shabby. In many of these boys and youths or young men were wedged together so tightly on benches, as hardly to admit of the smallest elbow-room. In the case of one school of over 1,000 pupils, the highest class of which contained specimens of the rising generation varying in age from 14 to 25, the Education Department Inspector had, two months before our visit, addressed the Head Master, suggesting that the difficulty of accommodation might be remedied by limiting the sections of a particular class to two, and stating that the roll number of the school should be reduced to about 600. The Head Master, after waiting a month, replied that before receiving the letter he had opened more than two sections of the particular class and that the demand for admission was so great that "if it were refused a large number of boys of the local gentry would be refused accommodation." The school register showed that, in the interval between receiving and replying to the Inspector's letter, he had admitted over 200 boys. It appeared that long ago the Managing Committee of this school was advised by the Inspector to keep the school numbers down to 500, a figure appropriate to the accommodation available. No attention, however, was paid to this advice, and the Inspector has noted that "there will ultimately be great trouble, owing to the impossibility of knowing anything about the majority of students who crowd the class-rooms." The Committee of this school once accepted a capital grant from Government, and were long ago offered a subsidy of Rs. 300 a month if they fulfilled certain conditions. Negotiations have been in progress for about five years, but the subsidy has not yet been accepted and the money sanctioned has been transferred to other schools. The political record of the school is bad.

The evils of overcrowding are enormous. In the first place the pupils cannot receive the individual attention that they so much require, and the unfortunate teachers who are generally, in any case, ill-equipped for their task, have hardly a chance of doing good work. It would require a teacher of altogether exceptional calibre to effect much in a room or shed crammed with boys of varying ages; and as discipline is generally very slack and playground accommodation almost invariably inadequate, the ordinary private-school teacher often gets nothing approaching to a fair opportunity. Secondly, overcrowding frequently means that numbers of pupils come from outside villages and other districts. For these, boarding arrangements are neither adequate nor satisfactory.

Many live with "guardians"—"related" or "unrelated"—and such guardians leave them very much to themselves. In any case they receive little or no out-of-school supervision from their teachers and masters. Some board in messes or hostels, which are, with few exceptions,—notably the excellent hostels of the Oxford Mission—poorly housed and feebly supervised. In one town of evil reputation we found a mess of students close to a high road at a little distance from the municipal area, where 20 young *bhadralok* were living in a collection of huts rented from a landholder for Rs. 18 a month. There were about four young men in each hut. They were under the control of a monitor aged 22—one of themselves—and of a professor who visited them. A mess is certainly no place for school-boys and hardly a desirable residence for students, some of whom either are or have hardly ceased to be boys. It is obvious that the authorities of an overcrowded school must be in a position which renders it impossible for them to devote to those pupils, who do not reside with parents, even the very small amount of supervision ordinarily available for boys from outside. In one large school, the Head Master frankly informed us that he took on trust the statements of his pupils as to the guardians with whom they resided.

In the third place, overcrowding renders cleanliness and discipline largely impossible. We have said that the class-rooms are frequently dirty and shabby. We have, too, seen sanitary arrangements which were clearly inadequate, and in one Dacca school they were absolutely indescribable. As for discipline, the character of the teachers, the precariousness of their position, the fear of losing school-fees, are all against anything of the kind. It is indeed remarkable that discipline is not worse; but we came across some singular instances of its absence. In one school we found from 20 to 30 boys in a hostel, which was a squalid shed with a corrugated-iron roof. The Superintendent slept there with two teachers. We were informed that two or three boys concerned in a series of political dacoities had lived in and operated from this hostel. The Superintendent, under whose nominal supervision these boys had lived, was still in office.

We were permitted to see some confidential records regarding this school. It appears that in 1908 the Director of Public Instruction vainly endeavoured to procure a radical change in the management, which was incredibly bad, and that the Syndicate ordered that the Secretary and President should be replaced by more suitable persons. Then the Secretary forwarded to the Registrar a representation, stating that little or no fault had previously been found with the school, and that as both the President and Secretary were men of moderate political views, no change should be made in the Committee. On the receipt of this, the Syndicate, apparently without consulting the Director, cancelled their former order and simply stipulated that the Head Master and one of the staff should be placed on the Committee.

In one large, overcrowded school, which figures prominently in the records of the Criminal Investigation Department and is recorded as having furnished fifty recruits to a notorious secret association, we found

a Class X of 56 pupils, six over the limit prescribed by the University, which is itself obviously too high. The discipline of the school had only recently met with censure from a Divisional Educational Officer.

A rapidly growing demand; some results.

180. Overcrowding is, of course, largely due to the rapidly increasing demand for English education. We have already quoted the interesting evidence of the Dacca Divisional Inspector of Schools on this subject. The Director of Public Instruction, when visiting Mymensingh last year, remarked on the great demand for English education in the town and the need of endeavouring to meet it in a systematic manner. It must, however, be remembered that much of the demand comes from outside the town, from a district of 4,526,422 inhabitants, mostly Muhammadans, and rapidly increasing; further that here the Muhammadans, who have only taken seriously to English education since the Partition, are turning to it more and more. Their boys generally begin later and progress more slowly than do Hindus, though there are brilliant exceptions. The Head Master of a large school in Mymensingh told us, that this year his most brilliant candidate for the Matriculation Examination was the son of a Muhammadan cultivator. In the same district there are now 150 Middle English Schools, which are largely responsible for creating that disdain of manual labour now found even in the sons of peasants. Any knowledge of English is too often held to be a distinction entitling the youth who possesses it to haunt the purlieus of some town in search of a job, or to lounge at home, living on the industrious members of his family and waiting for something to turn up. "I should like," said one of our most experienced witnesses—a man who knows Eastern Bengal and its people thoroughly well, "to see education up to the Middle English made compulsory; I should like to see things equalised; if every one was educated, every one would have to go back to his father's business and not merely loaf, as some English-educated do now." We quote these words merely as an example of what is sometimes the effect of English education. "When they cannot get employment," said a Bengali gentleman, "they read together, play cards, and read the *Amrita* or other similar papers. They do nothing. They hang about headquarters in the hope of something turning up."

What is important to notice is, that it is the inefficiency of what is called English education that is so largely responsible for this loafing. Really there is, as we show elsewhere in this report, ample work for *well*-educated young men who are willing to turn their hands to what they can get. Trade and business are fast increasing in Calcutta and Bengal. There are educational openings of all kinds. The work of Government is expanding. But, just as the bad quality of the instruction given prevents many a young man from availing himself of valuable opportunities, so does it only too often turn him into a partially educated malcontent, of little use either to himself or to Society, and this melancholy result is often principally due to the system that has reared him.

The supply of teachers.

181. For the increasing demand the supply of properly qualified teachers is wholly inadequate. In one school after another—even in towns—we found a proportion of the few graduates on the staff to be temporary

hands reading Law. All that we saw entirely endorsed the following statement of an experienced educational witness :—"A great difficulty about teachers of schools is this. They are so badly paid that almost all adopt the profession as a stopgap. Ordinarily a man only takes to teaching when he cannot get anything else to do." A Bengali professor of long experience told us :—"In the teaching line prospects of promotion are very poor indeed. . . . . Private colleges cannot afford to pay for good teachers, and pupils learning English have to devote more than half their time to the effort, all the way up from the lowest to the highest class. Even then the result is not commensurate with the labour, for the teaching is so bad. Our English teachers do not know English themselves. We badly want *good* teachers."

In Mymensingh and other places, we were told that there was a great need of properly qualified Head Masters for rural Middle English Schools. And everywhere our impression has been that teaching in private Anglo-Vernacular schools is regarded as the very last resource of a young man in possession of any sort of a University degree. So things tend to revolve in a dreary circle, inferior teachers producing inferior scholars, and the latter growing up to become teachers in their turn, only to produce a third generation of the same quality. A material raising of the whole standard of education and a determination to secure proper payment of persons, who fulfil one of the most important functions in the State, are the only remedies for such a disastrous state of things. It is hardly surprising that, in these days of high prices, the game of teaching in schools is hardly worth the candle for any one who can adopt a more promising line in life. Here is the statement of one who has followed it long: "A man with a wife and family would starve often, if he did not make money by private tuition or in some other way. In this school there is a master who passed the Entrance Examination in 1877 and was for long in a Mission school. He came here on Rs. 20, with a prospect of increase. After he had been here eight or nine years, the Principal, with great difficulty, got his pay raised to Rs. 28. He is a very efficient teacher. He is very hard up and can only afford to have his food cooked once a day. His brother helps him."

The result of conditions like this is that the general run of teachers in private schools is so poor, that even in one of the most important towns of the Presidency, rendered notorious not long ago by a shocking outrage, in which a number of the youth of the place are believed to have taken part, we found two leading educational institutions in charge of two men devoid of interest in their work and of natural aptitude for the control of boys.

Playgrounds and hostels.

182. The need of playgrounds is very noticeable; but this Government is making every effort to supply. Government is also endeavouring to move some large schools to more suitable sites. In a small country town we visited a High School of 455 boys, which had recently obtained undesirable notoriety. The town is surrounded by water, rice-fields and high embanked roads. There is no playground. Many boys live in bazar hostels, or with so-called guardians; there was little restraint of any kind,

and an almost total absence of healthy outlets for youthful energies. If some sinned, they were certainly sinned against by the conditions to which education had subjected them. They were, owing to circumstances for which they were not responsible, easy subjects for temptation.

183. Another task which is engaging the attention of Government is the provision of proper hostels. But there is a particular danger in adding feebly controlled hostels to feebly controlled schools. At one district headquarters town we were informed, on most reliable authority, that the existence of a particular vice in the local schools was notorious. It was definitely ascertained a few years ago that circumstances were similar in the schools of two other important towns which we visited. Present conditions in some institutions which we saw seemed to us distinctly to favour a continuance of such evils. For hostels *properly controlled* there is an enormous and crying need; but money spent on hostels hardly controlled at all is spent to little purpose. Not only is there a poisonous propaganda to guard against, there is also an insidious and terrible evil. We may incidentally note that there should be some system of superannuation in schools, or that young men who begin English education late in life should be in classes by themselves.

School Committees.

184. The methods of management followed by some School Committees have attracted our attention. We visited a newly-established High School in an important town. Recognition had not yet been asked for, but 166 boys had joined. The first Head Master had been dispensed with and a new man had been appointed on Rs. 100 a month. He belongs to a distant district and had been appointed on the strength of two post-cards from himself, describing his qualifications. He refused to pledge himself to take the post permanently. No enquiries whatever had been made about him by the Committee which was appointing him.

Money grants an inadequate remedy.

185. We consider that existing evils cannot be remedied by mere grants of money. The improvement of even the more prominent private schools by such means must necessarily be slow and liable to be impeded by differences with Committees and financial exigencies. Excessive expenditure, too, in this direction is open to criticism of the kind made by a gentleman who has done excellent service in the cause of Indian education. He has just declined to work longer on the Managing Committee of a college which is about to be taken over by Government. "I feel strongly," he told us, "that lakhs of Government money should be diverted from higher education to the education of the poor. Millions are living with their minds entirely uncultivated. . . . . I cannot bear to see lakhs of money being poured out on persons who can perfectly well afford to pay for their own education." And with the best will in the world, Government cannot reasonably hope either to induce all private schools to take grants, or to give those who will all the money that is required. Anglo-Vernacular education is going far ahead of any financial efforts that Government can make. It is more than probable that, when once certain town schools have been transplanted to

healthier surroundings, others will take their places in the discarded neighbourhoods. And we find a growing Muhammadan enthusiasm for English education in parts of Eastern Bengal, aided by the increasing profits of the cultivator in the same regions. At present in all the Calcutta colleges there are only 510 Muhammadan students. How will things be some years hence, when Eastern Bengal has its own University? Just now the whole tendency among the Muhammadan leaders is sedulously to stimulate a knowledge of English among their people; and in parts of Bengal it hardly needs a stimulus among any class of the population. A witness of long rural experience told us:—"All the lower classes want to know English. People have often told me that they would pay double the road-cess, if Government would provide the schools." Altogether Government is faced by a prospect which it cannot hope to meet by grants-in-aid alone. Some changes of system are imperative, if developments on lines that have already proved disastrous are to be avoided.

Suggestions.

186. The following changes seem to us likely, if effected, to carry with them the promise of material and continuous improvement:—

(*a*) We consider that the control of Government over all Anglo-Vernacular schools should be carefully secured. The University of Calcutta has quite enough to do in controlling and improving its affiliated colleges, some of which particularly need attention. Its claim to dominate High Schools as well is unreasonable, in view of the plain facts of the situation. The Syndicate is composed of men who have no special knowledge of school administration, seldom if ever visit schools outside Calcutta, and can exercise disciplinary authority only by the extreme measure of withdrawing recognition. For expert inspection, for all State pecuniary assistance, High School Committees depend on the Department whose wishes they are so often prone to disregard. Such an anomalous system has not unnaturally proved disastrous to the rising generation and to the public interests. All Anglo-Vernacular schools should be under the control of one authority only, the authority which can help them with money, and can with its organised system of inspection and examination guarantee the adequacy of its tests.

(*b*) We would like to see a school-leaving-certificate or school final examination instituted as soon as possible, on lines adapted to the circumstances of Bengal. Such an examination would largely substitute oral tests and school-marks, awarded on all-round work and conduct, for proficiency in a written examination. It would give instruction in subjects selected with a view to the actual practical needs of changing and progressive times; it would not be allowed to languish for want of qualified teachers, but, backed by persistent effort, would become equal in practical value to the Matriculation.

and would form part of the "recognised" curriculum. Even if introduced at first in a few schools only, the innovation would make its way here, as it is doing in other parts of India. There can be no doubt that the need for an alternative education to the Arts course is realised by advanced Indians themselves, although they are generally opposed to a school-leaving-certificate curriculum. In view of the opinions carefully explained by the Hon'ble Mr. Surendra Nath Banarji in the Imperial Council debate of the 6th January 1914, we did not question him in regard to this subject. But in the course of his evidence he said to us:—"There would be less unrest if there were more employment. I would suggest education in agriculture and industries. They should have had it long ago. I think that then they would get employment in the jute, coal and electric industries. . . . There has been a change of feeling; it is felt that the *bhadralok* should take more to agriculture, but the procuring of land for the purpose is a difficulty now. . . . It is becoming more difficult for educated men to obtain employment. All along the line it is harder for passed men to get as good employment as they would have done ten years ago."

The Hon'ble Mr. Chakravarti, who represented the Bengal Landholders' Association before us, said:—"Discontent is greatest among the *bhadralok*, due, as we think, to literary education, the object of which is to furnish the recipient with some sort of service. The only remedy that we can think of, is to induce them to follow agricultural and industrial pursuits." Both these gentlemen, had they been questioned further in this connection, would probably have declared for agricultural and industrial schools. The desirability of such institutions will receive careful consideration in another chapter, and it will be sufficient here to say that the object at which the above-named gentlemen aim is not likely to be served by the present predominant Arts Course.

A Professor of Economics, belonging to a private college, who is a keen co-operationist and presented us with two pamphlets which by no means eulogise the effects of British rule on the people, told us, after explaining that the *bhadralok* were leaving the villages:—"Of course it is natural that the professional classes should go to town in search of employment; but that is because of the education which they get. If they got more agricultural and industrial education, they would not flock into Government service. I think there should be more agricultural and industrial education."

(c) As the Educational Department is hardly strong enough to undertake a school-leaving-certificate examination, it should be

reinforced as soon as possible. The necessary curriculum, too, cannot attain general success, unless the standard of teachers in the majority of High Schools improves to an extent improbable as long as recognition rests with the University.

(*d*) There should be complete and constant inspection of all schools, recognised and unrecognised. The bad communications and peculiar educational circumstances of some districts should be specially considered, and a system of District Inspectors, who will keep carefully in touch with District Magistrates and Subdivisional Officers, should be instituted. At present inspection is utterly inadequate.

(*e*) Colleges and schools should be aided by the loan of *men*, as well as by gifts of money. A good deal of Government money is largely thrown away, because the schools aided are badly staffed. If the Department were in a position to lend qualified masters, the situation would be more reassuring than it is. Such men could be removed at once, if they proved unsatisfactory. We notice the great difficulty which an Inspector experiences in procuring the removal of undesirable or incompetent masters from aided schools.

(*f*) We are inclined to think that classes of 50 are far too large for boys of sixteen, and that to pass such boys through the portal of a low standard examination into large college lecture-classes in a town, often far away from their homes, must be entirely wrong. In the Brojo Mohan College, Barisal, we found a logic class of about 100 and another class of about 140. How much real attention and teaching do the members of such classes get? How very much they must need! Be it remembered that all the time many are living with utterly careless "guardians" or in messes like the mess mentioned in paragraph 179. There is strong evidence to the effect that the Matriculation standards are too low, and that boys are constantly passed on to college lectures and unwieldy classes, who are altogether unfit for such a process. They are, on entering college, really boys who should be sitting in school classes listening to school-teaching. The Indian Universities Commission unanimously found that the acquirements of Indian undergraduates were in many cases inadequate and superficial, and that this was due to no fault of the undergraduates themselves. This was 12 years ago. Is it likely that in Bengal things have since improved?

We have twice referred to the serious inadequacy of suitable boarding arrangements. Our remarks apply both to High Schools and to colleges with which we have come in contact. We mention the subject again, not because we are not aware that it is occupying the particular

attention of Government, but because we would emphasise its extreme importance. The present state of affairs is considered by witnesses with special means of knowledge to be a direct reason for the spread of anarchist doctrines. It is certainly responsible for much that is most mischievous to the boys concerned.

Undesirable teachers.

187. We have noticed on several occasions how easily persons of pernicious political antecedents find their way as masters into Anglo-Vernacular schools. Nor is the *personnel* of School Committees always void of reproach in this respect. It has been suggested to us that, when once Government has secured recognition and effective control, unrecognized schools can be squeezed out by refusal to recognize their transfer certificates. This, given the power of control and a rigorous adherence to what would popularly be considered a severe measure, might in time be effective; but the process would be too slow for the grave needs of the situation. We are convinced that some system of registration of teachers in *all* schools is absolutely necessary if the youth of Bengal are to be in any degree adequately protected from doctrines which inculcate robbery and murder as a legitimate method of warfare against the established Government. In the interest not only of the rising generation but of the whole community, the existence of such institutions as in any degree resemble the school of Pulin Behari Das of Dacca, the now defunct national school at Sonarang in Eastern Bengal, or the school of Arjun Lal at Jaipur, should be rendered absolutely impossible.

We may give a summary of the most sensational incidents in the history of a fourth school taken from a record of 1913. The school was started in 1889 as a Middle English School. In November 1903 it was converted into a High School, but it has not yet been affiliated. The boys took a prominent part in the boycott movement and were drilled in club and dagger-play by Pulin Bihari Das himself (paragraph 14, Chapter II). One of the students, after experimenting with bombs in the presence of a large number of students and other villagers, was caught redhanded with some of these instruments of outrage and with incriminating papers. He was tried with three other students (who were discharged for want of evidence) and was sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment. One of the three discharged was strongly suspected of shooting a Police Inspector, and could undoubtedly have thrown considerable light on that assassination. In 1911 some guns, revolvers and ammunition were discovered hidden in the roof of the school house. It would be hard to estimate all the mischief done by this one establishment. It is obvious that even when a school of this kind is closed its malign influence survives in the persons whom it has trained to be pests of society.

No system of recognition can *alone* extirpate such schools. There are teachers and managing committees who are content to carry on without recognition, and, as is apparent from paragraphs 164 and 178 of Chapter VIII, such persons are likely to increase rather than diminish.

National schools, too, are not defunct, and at any time a wave of political excitement may revive them in considerable force. Altogether we can look forward to no near period when unrecognized schools will not attract a certain number of boys whose parents either do not clearly understand what the absence of recognition means or do not particularly desire that their sons shall present themselves for the University examination. This being the case, and unrecognised schools being the natural refuge of teachers who, notorious for the deliberate corruption of youth, have either been ejected from recognized establishments or can obtain no admission thereto, to leave unrecognized institutions without a substantial safeguard would be in the highest degree injurious to the interests not only of many unfortunate boys, but of the common weal.

Again there will always be Committees which, desiring recognition for their schools, are afraid or reluctant to discharge pernicious teachers. Negotiations with such bodies mean delay and sometimes exacerbation of popular feeling. If the result be refusal or withdrawal of recognition, innocent boys and parents suffer and a neighbourhood is infected by a school at variance with the Educational Department of Government.

The situation clearly requires a remedy which will go with all speed to the root of the mischief, a means of direct and effective action against the dangerous teachers *themselves*, the conscious agents of a deliberate organised attack on British rule carried on by methods of the basest and most mischievous description.

Chances of Public Co-operation.

188. In attacking the very difficult problems connected with educational reform, the co-operation of the political leaders would be, of course, invaluable. Unfortunately, these gentlemen have already proclaimed their desire to walk "in the old ways of control and recognition by the Calcutta University," which have, they say, led to "triumphantly successful results." In some countries the parents of the rising generation, who after all are the persons most concerned would make such an attitude impossible. But in Bengal the ordinary middle-class parent simply wants his son to gain a University credential. He wants nothing else. He knows, if he troubles to think, that there are very dangerous influences to be encountered by youths at school and college; but he ignores these as long as possible, or is content to hope that his son may escape them. As for combining with others for the removal of such influences, if he ever ventured to dream of anything of the kind, School Committees, teachers, politicians, all the vested interests, would combine against him. They would tell him that the result of such ill-advised action would be the raising of examination standards and the obscuring of youthful hopes. If he persisted, he would encounter social boycott and perhaps newspaper abuse; probably, too, his son whom he wished to safeguard would turn against him. But he would not persist. He would prefer the dangerous present to the certainty of a very disagreeable future. Some fathers, indeed, are under no illusions; but there is no chance of their

combining to secure reform. In Barisal, a Hindu zamindar and Honorary Magistrate told us :—"I preferred sending my boys off to Calcutta to sending them to a High School just at my door. I have a relative in Calcutta to look after them there. My boys are now in the Presidency College. I am very much afraid of contamination. My cousin, the professor, allows them to play no games and keeps them in his house, in order to keep them away from contamination." The Collector of Bakarganj told us : "Parents are all terrified of their sons meeting with bad associations—schools are a frightful source of danger, particularly the lack of hostel accommodation."

The position of the District Officer.

189. Some Commissioners and District Officers have complained to us that the position of the District Officer in regard to Anglo-Vernacular schools is unsatisfactory and indefinite. Several passages in the Education Manual refer to the subject, but prescribe no very definite rules of action. The Director of Public Instruction is particularly anxious to enlist the co-operation of District Officers; and we think that, in view of the history of Anglo-Vernacular schools in this Presidency, of the part some have played as recruiting grounds for sedition and crime, District Officers should have definite powers of control and veto regarding the position and appointment of the persons who direct them, either as managers or as masters. What these powers should be might be discussed at a conference of Educational and Executive Officers. It must be borne in mind that the responsibilities of District Officers are exceptionally heavy in Bengal under present circumstances, and they should be given powers which will enable them to discharge those responsibilities adequately.

Conclusion.

190. If the co-operation of the popular leaders cannot be obtained in carrying out the measures which are most likely to safeguard the future for the youth of Bengal and for the State, these measures should, we submit, nevertheless proceed. From events elsewhere it would seem that the educational prospects of other Provinces also are concerned, and as regards this Presidency, it is melancholy to see so generally poor an outcome from honourable enthusiasm and self-denying endeavour. Further acquiescence in a system which has produced such results seems to us out of the question. In regard to Anglo-Vernacular schools Bengal has reached a decisive parting of the ways, and it needs but a few more steps along the path of *laissez faire* and inefficiency to make return impossible.

PART V.

The Economic Position.

CHAPTER IX.

The Economic Pressure on the Middle Classes.

Political effect of Economic Pressure.

191. In Chapter VIII of this Report, we have dealt with the enormous increase in the output of our schools and colleges and its generally defective quality. One of the evils for which our educational policy has been made responsible by writers on Indian subjects, is the increasing unemployment accentuated by the rise in prices and wages, which is said to be affecting the educated classes. To these causes they ascribe much of the stress which is making itself manifest by those uneasy movements of the various Indian political strata, known as "unrest."

But the view which commends itself to the Committee is, that the economic ills from which India is said, rightly or wrongly, to be suffering, owe most of their political potency to the nationalist aspect from which they are viewed by educated Indians.

Sir Valentine Chirol's opinion.

192. Nowhere has the economic side of the discontent been more ably described than by Sir Valentine Chirol on pages 224—226 and in Chapter XXII of his book "Indian Unrest". His conclusions, briefly stated, are, that, owing to the rise in prices and wages, the clerkly castes are in a less favourable condition, from a material point of view, than skilled artisans, or even daily labourers; the educational machine has increased its output at a rate which has outrun the demand, and the product is "not only unemployed, but in many cases almost unemployable." He adds such striking allegations as that "not a few" educated youths have been "taken on by philanthropic Hindus to do mechanical labour in jute mills at Rs. 15 a month simply to keep them from starvation", while a Hindu gentleman, one of the highest authorities on education, is reported to have estimated the number of unemployed among the educated classes in Bengal at 40,000. It is obvious that, if such a state of affairs can be shown to exist, it would of itself go far to account for much of the discontent expressed or felt with the British rule in India.

These extreme instances may, however, be set aside from present consideration. Among the many tens of thousands of mill hands in and round Calcutta the most detailed enquiries could discover only an infinitesimal number of *bhadralok*, who had taken to this form of livelihood under such exceptional circumstances as social outcasting and the like; while as we shall see, the alleged unemployment of the educated is hardly warranted by facts, and the author carefully abstains from basing any deduction on these statements.

A more important item in his work is his description of the political capital which has been made out of the "drain," and out of the poverty of many of the agricultural class; and he gives due

value to the bitterness which has been engendered by the "failure of Western-educated Indians to achieve any marked success in commercial and industrial undertakings." While awarding high praise to the successful efforts of Government to increase the security and efficiency of Indian agriculture, he notices the discontent which has been evoked among the loyal section of Indian progressives by the failure of Government to adopt the forward policy of industrial advancement, which its pronouncements had at one time led them to hope for.

We may thus divide the alleged economic factor in Indian politics into the pressure of rising prices on the inelastic income of the individual, and a general impression that the increasing material prosperity of the country is benefiting the foreign trader rather than its own children.

Opinions of Witnesses regarding available employment.

193. We have recorded the opinions of a very large number of witnesses, landholding, commercial, professional and official, on the present economic status of the middle classes, and its effects on their political leanings.

Widely divergent views were put forward regarding the question of unemployment. Some witnesses went so far as to say that political dacoities were committed by unemployed *bhadralok* under pressure of hunger; but we are not sure if they could have been aware of the actual facts. The weight of evidence, however, was decidedly in favour of the view that employment of a sort was forthcoming for all persons with an English education, who did not expect too high a price for the qualifications which they possessed, a rather common failing with those Indians who possess an inferior English education. Those witnesses, who enlarged most on the miserable condition of the middle classes and their lack of employment, were unable to point to any specific instances of educated men actually failing to get employment; one witness, a resident of a large *bhadralok* village in the Jessore district, said that of 300 graduates in his village, none were unemployed. Another witness stated that "plucked B.A's." obtain salaries of from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 as school-masters, a statement which may be corroborated any day by a perusal of the advertisement columns of the *Bengalee*, and it was generally agreed that there was a considerable difficulty in obtaining qualified masters for mofussil schools.

Not one witness questioned on the subject asserted that the marriage value of B.A's. had declined. Several witnesses, especially a prominent Indian industrialist of Calcutta, thought that the demand for employés, especially from private firms and railways, was increasing quite as fast as the supply.

Diminished purchasing Power of salaries

194. Turning now to the purchasing power of salaries, we find there is strong evidence to show that the subdivision of property and the rise in prices are causing distress among the smaller non-cultivating tenure-holders. Many witnesses testified to the fact that applicants who had not passed the Matriculation examination can only expect to obtain posts which carry something short of a living wage. The minimum wage on which a married clerk can live decently in Calcutta and support his

family was stated by Sir R. N. Mukherji to be Rs. 50. Several witnesses testified, with evident regret, to the rise in the standard of comfort, which they thought contributed to the distress of the middle classes; and all witnesses, who were examined on the point, were of opinion that the condition of the poorer members of the middle classes has greatly deteriorated during the past few years, and that a large section of them had not the means of living in decent comfort. Many witnesses lamented the distaste for cultivation inherent in the middle classes. As a witness from Serajganj stated: "Men who have any education do not like to cultivate." An official witness from Bakarganj said: "The one thing a cultivator wants to do is to get some one else to cultivate for him and himself become a tenure-holder."

Conclusions from witnesses' statements.

195. Though opinions varied as to the share in the unrest due to economic pressure, there were few, if any, witnesses, who entirely denied its existence as a political factor. The most authoritative and best supported opinions coincide with the conclusion to which other indications appear to point, that the discontent is mainly due to mistaken ideas of religion and patriotism; but there is strong support for the view that a large body of educated persons, living merely as clerks or school-masters on low salaries, or as idle rent chargers, is a grave source of political instability. As a Bombay witness of high commercial standing observed: "the industrial backwardness of the Bengalis is politically undesirable."

Evidence of Census Tables.

196. We turn now to the statistical evidence. Whether the English-knowing classes are in possession of adequate employment, cannot be absolutely determined from the census tables. The table headings, in a very large number of cases, do not separate ministerial or even superior from menial employment. Constables and peons are grouped with Sub-Inspectors and clerks; shop-keepers, coolies and other menials with clerks, managers and owners of shops. The occupation figures of the 1901 census cannot be compared with those of 1911 in the necessary detail. And yet some attempt must be made to use what is, after all, the sole authority of its kind, and to discover, if not an accurate determination of the problem, at any rate some indication of its probable solution.

In the census for Eastern Bengal and Assam, figures were collected showing the occupations of the 98,064 males literate in English. The only way to obtain some idea of how far these persons are succeeding in obtaining the kind of livelihood for which their education has fitted them, is to deduct, in the first place, persons who live on rents and private incomes; next, labourers, domestic servants and beggars, who must be occupying these positions from choice, from social degradation, or from hereditary custom, rather than from economic pressure; and lastly, priests, a numerous class, to whom a knowledge of English is not essential. The balance, 38,311, or 39 per cent. of the total, represents those holding positions in which a knowledge of English would most probably be useful to them. We shall attempt to estimate, in the next paragraph, the employment of the English-knowing members of the *bhadralok* castes, by applying this percentage to the total number of male members of those castes.

Bhadralok is the term applied in Bengal to the Hindu educated middle classes, the chief of whom are the Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas. There are several other castes nearly approaching them in social and economic status; but if we are to select the castes most thoroughly typical of English-educated Bengalis, and indeed including in their number the large proportion of that body, our choice is bound to fall on these three castes, and whatever conclusion may be drawn regarding their economic status, will be fairly true of the English-knowing Hindu population generally.

Statement showing employment of Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas (males) in present Bengal in 1911.

Total males.	Aged 0—20	Aged over 55.	Total males over 20 and under 55.	Males recorded as workers in Census tables.	Total male dependants	Living on rents, dividends, etc.	Living on cultivation.	Balance needing employment (column 4 *minus* columns 7 and 8).	Numbers employed in capacities where English might be useful.	Beggars.	Domestic servants.	Labourers.	Priests.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1,194,225	531,430	77,624	585,171	656,971	537,254	99,194	160,447	325,530	253,154	4,778	85,156	20,487	83,737

NOTE.—Numbers under different ages have been calculated by applying the proportion shown to be of that age in Table XIV (Census, Volume II) to Caste total in Table XVI.

The most noteworthy feature in the above statement is, that the number of persons aged from 20 to 55 (column 4) falls short by 71,800 of the numbers actually working (column 5). The number of men between 20 and 55 years of age out of employment must be equal to the number of old men and boys actually employed in excess of 71,800, a number which cannot be a very large one. There are 250,299 English-knowing members of the three castes included in the statement. Some of these, no doubt, are landholders and *rentiers* and as such appear in columns 7 and 8. What we have to see is, whether there is enough employment for the remainder in the posts shown in column 10. This column includes, as we have already found, a number of occupations in which English is not required. We have also seen in Eastern Bengal and Assam, 39 per cent. of the English-knowing population were actually employed in occupations similar to those included in column 10. Even if we allow for the larger demand for English-knowing men which must exist in Calcutta, it is clear that there is ample room among the 253,154 workers shown in column 10 for the 97,617 English literates, who represent 39 per cent. of the 250,299 Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas literate in English.

Vague though the indications afforded by these figures are, they clearly point in the direction of there being ample employment of a sort for *bhadralok* in general, and in particular for the English-knowing section.

These three castes, however, must be feeling the competition of other castes who have recently taken to education, of which they at one time held the monopoly. The increase in English-knowing males

of all castes in present Bengal has been 172,600. The increase in English-knowing males among *bhadralok* has been 100,131. There are 469,654 English-knowing males in Bengal; deducting 31,051 Christians, Jews, Chinese, etc., there is a balance among Hindus and Muhammadans of 438,603, while the Brahmans, Baidyas and Kayasthas literate in English number only 250,299. Thus, out of these 188,304 of other castes who know English, 72,469 have been added during the last decade. There is a strong body of opinion among witnesses to show that this rate of increase will be very greatly accelerated in the future, especially among Muhammadans. Thus the competition of other castes with the *bhadralok* for posts in which a knowledge of English is necessary, is evidently destined to become severe.

On the above figures no positive conclusion can safely be based and we have, therefore, avoided drawing any. The statistics, however, afford an indication of certain important tendencies which have been alluded to by many witnesses and will form part of our argument in paragraph 200.

Income-tax and education figures.

197. More definite statistics, if limited in application, can be obtained from the income-tax returns.

Estimates of the figures for present Bengal in 1891-92 and 1901-02 proved unreliable, and the total figures for the two provinces of Bengal and Bihar and Orissa in 1912-13 have been therefore compared with those for old Bengal in the two former years :—

	NUMBER OF SALARIED ASSESSEES TO INCOME-TAX.						TOTAL.	
	GOVERNMENT.		LOCAL FUNDS.		PRIVATE.			
	Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000.
Old Bengal—								
1891-92	3,034	7,259	552	1,671	4,444	11,441	8,030	20,371
1901-02	3,816	8,970	641	2,334	6,613	17,689	11,070	28,993
Percentage of increase ...	25	23	16	39	48	54	37	42
1912-13—								
Present Bengal	4,937	.....	1,230	.....	11,818	.....	17,985	.....
Bihar and Orissa	1,534	.....	124	.....	1,069	.....	2,727	.....
Total old Bengal ...	6,471	.....	1,354	.....	12,887	.....	20,712	.....
Percentage of increase since 1901-02.	69	.....	111	.....	94	.....	87	.....

The most striking fact that arises from a consideration of the above statement is, how very greatly the increase in private, exceeds that in Government employment.

Before 1901-02, the increase in posts carrying a salary of less than Rs. 1,000 exceeded that in posts of Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 5,000, and there is no special reason for considering that this proportion has materially changed in the last decade.

We turn now to the figures for education :—

	Total number of Indian male students receiving—			Total.
	Collegiate education.	High School education.	Middle English education.	
Old Bengal—				
1891-92	5,201	26,304	23,350	64,855
1901-02	8,095	34,795	44,726	97,616
Percentage of increase ...	.....	.....	.....	50
1912-13—				
Present Bengal	10,899	55,880	61,027	127,806
Bihar and Orissa	1,874	28,110	20,050	50,034
Total Bengal ...	.....	.....	.....	177,840
Percentage of increase on figures for 1901-02 ...	.....	.....	.....	82

These percentage increases compare as follows :—

	Increase in total education.	Increase in assessees above Rs. 1,000.	Increase in total assessees.
1891-92 to 1901-02 ...	50	37	42
1901-02 to 1912-13 ...	82	87	...

It should, if these figures are reliable, be easier now for an English-knowing student to obtain employment than it was ten years ago; and, if persons drawing a salary of less than Rs. 1,000 a year have continued to increase in the same proportion to higher paid employes as before, very decidedly easier.

Employment in District offices.

198. That there is ample employment available for Matriculates is clear from a consideration of the figures for district offices. In the Midnapur, Dacca and Mymensingh Collectors' offices, there are 402 clerks. Of these, 16 held degrees of F.A. and upwards, 227 were Matriculates, and the balance had no degrees at all. Even in the past five years a considerable proportion of men who have not passed the Matriculation examination have been admitted, though mostly, it would seem, for family reasons.

Political Suspects.

199. Interesting details have been obtained regarding political suspects from several districts in Eastern Bengal. Out of a total of several hundreds of listed suspects, 43 per cent. were said to have sufficient private means for their support. Of the balance, 15 per cent. had obtained satisfactory employment, while 42 per cent. were either unemployed or in receipt of inadequate salaries. Of the 42 per cent., three per cent. were in possession of the F.A. or superior degrees, and 39 per cent. were only Matriculates or had no degree at all. On examining the detailed records of each man's career, however, it became clear that those who had failed to get adequate employment had almost invariably joined the terrorist movement as students, to the ruin of their studies. Evidence was not wanting to show that the lot of such men was a very hard one. After starting, perhaps, as the employees of some *swadeshi* concern, they opened shops for medicines or groceries, only to fail in a few months; they next drift away as commission

dealers in jute, wood or grain; here too, they fail, and find at last a temporary haven of rest in the cutcherry of some discontented zamindar, or in the class-room of an unaided school. More than one witness testified to the fact, that some of this class, on obtaining fixed employment, were glad to settle down, and leave politics alone. But, as a rule, it is to be feared that such men are not and never could have been of the character which attains success in life.

Conclusions as to employment.

200. The conclusion which commends itself to the Committee after a full consideration of the evidence, is that the educational product, be its quality what it may, has not so far outrun its market.

The class of occupation, however, afforded by private and railway employ, is still far too largely clerical, and to a very small extent technical or industrial. And the newly-awakened enthusiasm for education among other than the clerkly castes, and especially among Muhammadans, gives rise to grave misgiving regarding the future sufficiency of the demand for the educational product. The increase in the number of literates in English has hitherto been mainly due to the large proportion of the higher castes who have taken an English education; but if other castes are to follow their example, the base of the pyramid will now begin to extend as rapidly as its height has increased in the past, and its volume will very soon be far in excess of anything that merely clerical and professional employment can accommodate; for in no country in the world can there be found such an entire absence of truly industrial employment, with so elaborate a system of education.

The Decennial Memorandum on Moral and Material Progress.

201. There is, however, a further and more definite issue to meet; and that is, how has the purchasing power of money, especially the slender salary of the lower paid clerk, been affected by the rise in prices and in labourers' wages. The Memorandum on the Material Condition of the People in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the year 1902-03 to 1911-12 gives little detailed information on the rise in prices, but contains some general remarks of interest which are reproduced below :—

Condition of professional classes.

"5. The middle classes who subsist by professional or clerical employment were hard hit by the rise of prices. Being dependent on fixed salaries, the dearness of food either entailed a reduction in their standard of comfort, or reduced the margin between sufficiency and privation. The pressure of high prices on these classes was, indeed, so real as to oblige Government to institute a system of 'grain compensation allowance' for clerks and other employees on low pay, in order to counteract, to some extent, the diminution of their assets which was its immediate result. In spite, however, of the difficulties caused by rising prices, the decline in the purchasing power of the rupee, and keener competition, they do not reduce their expenditure on social and other ceremonies and they consequently find it more and more difficult to maintain their position. To this result the joint family system contributes, for it is apt to check enterprise and individual effort. Each member of the family is sure of support, and has not, therefore, the same incentive to strike out for himself, as if he were independent. Drones are tolerated and feed on the fruits of the labour of others. On the other hand, the system of common property saves individual members from want and is a relief to those earning small salaries.

"6. The cultivators, being able to dispose of their produce at better prices, benefited by the rise. Apart, however, from this, there is a general consensus of opinion that they are in better circumstances than a generation ago.

Condition of cultivators.

"In . . . . Bengal the cultivation of jute has proved more profitable; it is estimated that the crop of one year alone (1906) sold for 40 crores of rupee. . . . ."

The Record of Prices and Wages.

202. The record of prices and wages maintained by Government shows the figures for various staple articles of food in Eastern Bengal during the past 20 years as under :—

	Average retail price in rupees per maund.	Increase.
Rice, common, in the Dacca and Chittagong Divisions—		
Ten years ending 1900	3·186	
" " " 1910	3·941	23 per cent.

	Average wholesale price in rupees per 10 maunds.	Increase.
Ghi at Dacca—		
1897—1901	389·25	
1907—1911	447·00	14 per cent.
Gur at Dacca—		
1897—1901	56·89	
1907—1911	65·88	16 per cent.
Jute, ordinary, at Calcutta—	Per bale.	
1897—1901	29·20	
1907—1911	42·80	46 per cent.

Wages of domestic servants are not available in the returns, and even where recorded, they are usually very inaccurate. The wages of the lowest paid agricultural labourer and of the jute mill cooly have been taken as a guide, but the increase in the rate of domestic servants' wages is probably greater than, though influenced by, the increase in ordinary cooly wages :—

	1897—1901 Per mensem.	1907—1910. Per mensem.	Increase.
	Rs.	Rs.	
Lowest-paid able-bodied agricultural labourer in Eastern Bengal and Assam	7·8	10·06	29 per cent.

	1897—1901. Per diem.	1900—1912. Per diem.	Increase.
	Rs.	Rs.	
Jute Mill cooly at Calcutta	·31	·38	22 per cent.

The Cost of Living.

203. Taking the above figures and other calculations into account, the conclusion seems to be that the ordinary items of daily expenditure have risen not less, and perhaps considerably more, than 20 per cent. during the past decade. On the other hand, the cultivator is obviously better off, because he grows more food-grain in most cases than he eats; and if he is a jute grower, then the margin of profit, even if he has to buy food-grain, is even larger.

A letter, from Mr. Coates, District Superintendent of Police, on special duty for police recruitment, to the Inspector-General of Police, dated the 19th June 1911, contains some interesting details about the cost of living in the case of the class from which constables are drawn.

A labourer at Gafargaon on 8 to 10 annas a day, with a family, was comfortably off.

Labourers on Rs. 4 to Rs. 7 a month and food were well off.

In Malda, *shahrishtadars* pay their servants Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 a month with food.

Small cultivators make Rs. 15 or Rs. 16 a month, and are comfortably off.

Boatmen earn Rs. 15 a month.

Policemen make Rs. 5 a month in "tips" outside their pay.

A newspaper-seller makes Rs. 14 or Rs. 15 a month.

The local servant class in Mymensingh have taken to shop-keeping and earn from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 a month.

Hotel-keepers charge 6 annas a day, which does not include *pan* or tobacco.

Members of the servant class, who are educating their children, now think it beneath their dignity to work as servants.

It would seem, then, that the labourer or small cultivator spends about Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 in mere food, on himself, as the working member of the family. It costs him about Rs. 15 to keep himself and his family in what his class regard as comfort.

Members of the educated castes, and even of castes who have lately taken to education, have to meet a good deal more expense in the matter of clothes, servants, house-keeping, etc., than the cooly or small cultivator, and to such men a salary of Rs. 20, unless supplemented from other sources, such as private tuition, the help of relatives, or the rent of land, means a very miserable subsistence. Apart from the rise in wages and prices, the increase in the standard of comfort has also made living far more costly, especially to the educated classes. Gramophones, mineral waters, umbrellas, European clothes, better oil and lamps, cigarettes, mosquito curtains, patent medicines, more frequent travelling, are luxuries so widespread among this class that many of them now rank almost as necessities.

Effect of these factors on the Middle Classes.

204. We have now to consider what the precise effect of these economic difficulties is on the middle classes.

Although it has been recognised that Rs. 30 should be the minimum wage for a clerk in a district office of Eastern Bengal, there are a large number of probationers, school-masters and other employés of Government or local bodies, on lower pay than this, and the number of educated persons drawing from Rs. 10 to Rs. 30 in small trading concerns, private schools, zamindars' cutcherries and the like, must be immense.

The persons who fill these lower paid posts are mostly drawn from the crowd of failures, which has been described in the last quinquennial review of education in India as "Educational wastage."

The figures for male examinees in present Bengal in 1911-12 were as under :—

Examinations.			Number of candidates.	Passed.	Failed.
Matriculation	...	...	6,393	4,131	2,262
Intermediate	...	...	4,420	2,119	2,101
B.A., B.Sc., etc.	...	...	1,823	1,052	771

Besides these, from 10,000 to 20,000 boys must leave the secondary schools every year without appearing for matriculation.

Apart from persons in receipt of salaries, there are very large numbers of the educated middle class returned as living on rents, or as cultivators. Even the latter, as will be shown later, are really in most cases mere rent-chargers. Continued subdivision and sub-infudation of rights have immensely increased the number of persons, who depend for their livelihood on the difference between what the tiller of the soil pays to his immediate superior and what is ultimately paid to Government by the zamindar. This margin, with its lessened purchasing power, has to support an ever-increasing number of persons whose standard of comfort grows higher. Again, the rent-chargers, many of whom live in the villages, find their circumstances in direct and unfavourable contrast with those of the cultivating classes, who belong to the Muhammadan community or the low Hindu castes. The position of these has been immensely improved by the rise in the prices of all crops, especially jute, while the *bhadralok* tenure-holders have long since divested themselves of the right to cultivate; few of them could go "back to the land," even if they wished to do so; and if they could, what of the thousands of peasantry, whom they would displace from their tiny holdings?

General conclusions regarding political effect of economic conditions.

205. We have thus seen that, though employment has increased rapidly enough to keep pace with the output of the colleges and schools, there is still an intellectual proletariat, whose margin of subsistence the menace of rising prices is assailing ever closer and closer, while they have little, if any, hope of bettering their condition. We have also to take into account the effect of the preaching of such economic doctrines as the "Drain of Indian resources to England." The Indian press, in discussing the various factors which make up the alleged "drain," does not, perhaps, always lay sufficient emphasis on the really serious loss to the country from its own lack of commercial enterprise, a loss of which the ordinary Indian must see numerous object lessons in daily life. An unbiassed observer of these object lessons cannot fail to draw the conclusion, that the people of Bengal must adapt themselves to modern conditions, and gird themselves for effective industrial competition with the foreigner. But in a competitor unarmed with efficient weapons the success of others is apt to evoke envy rather than emulation. The Bengali who has the interest of his nation at heart, and desires to support its self-respect, would fain discover among his own people the qualities which command his admiration among Western peoples. In the field of law, his success has already been fully admitted. In literature, his high standard of excellence has long been known to students of Indian letters, and has begun to gain the acknowledgment of the Western

World: in art and science also, he is winning his way to recognition. But after all, the chief factors which determine a nation's eventual place among its sister nations, and the present happiness and self-respect of its individual members, are its political life and traditions, and its commerce and industry. It is in the second of these that the sons of Bengal may find the safest and most speedy road, if they have the ability and determination to enter and to persevere in it, to the respect of others, to their own self-respect, and also in due time to their own political consolidation. The failure which has so far attended their half-hearted and unguided attempts to follow this path has left its legacy of national bitterness. No one who has been in a position to compare the leading Indian society of Bombay with that of Calcutta can fail to ascribe many of the obvious differences between the two, to the greater steadiness and the more assured self-confidence imported into political and social life in the sister Presidency by Indian leaders of commerce and industry.

To conclude, then, of the English-knowing classes, only a certain portion fail in obtaining adequate employment; but too many see in the Foreigner an economic foe. Deeply imbued as they are with national settlement, they must watch the European merchant of the Indian trader from beyond the borders of Bengal amassing a fortune; even the cooly and the cultivator are benefited by the increased activity in industry and trade. But the rising stream of wealth somehow passes them by; nay, it takes from them, in higher prices and wages, a little even of the very little that they have.

CHAPTER X.

Proposed Economic Remedies.

Resume of conclusions of previous Chapter.

206. We have found a large educated class, scattered through country villages, as well as towns, who are all either rent-receivers, salaried employees or professional men. Only a portion of them earn their own living; and hardly any of them live a life of productive activity. They are often acutely conscious of their industrial ineffectiveness, and while their strong feeling of national sentiment inclines them to be impatient of foreign rule, they also lay on it the blame for the economic pressure which many of them are feeling, and for their industrial stagnation. A state of unhealthy political activity has arisen, especially, as is often the case in all but the most politically advanced countries, among the student class. This unrest compels Government to take certain repressive measures, a regrettable necessity which makes all the more desirable the adoption of those remedial and beneficent measures, which will afford the most certain cure of the worst evils of the situation, while proving that Government is no less determined to create prosperity than to maintain order.

Difficulties of assisting the "bhadralok" class.

207. We are for the moment considering the problem of assisting more particularly the educated classes. From this point of view, not much help can at present be expected from the two departments especially concerned with the task of furthering rural development. The *bhadralok* castes have very little direct connection with agriculture. Our enquiries showed that in Eastern Bengal a *bhadralok* cultivating land with his own cattle and ploughs and with his own hired labourers, was indeed a rarity. Though such instances were somewhat more frequent in Western and Northern Bengal, even there they seemed to be decidely exceptional. Many *bhadralok* when asked if they cultivate their holdings, will reply in the affirmative; but further questioning will almost always elicit the fact that they are only letting out their land on some form of produce-rent. It seems probable that the large number of *bhadralok* returned at the Census as living on cultivation are mainly receivers of produce-rents. Not only, then, are *bhadralok* cultivators exceptional, but very large number of these castes, including most of the smaller tenure-holders, have no land that they could resume and cultivate, even if they wished. Other castes also, as they acquire education, seem more and more inclined to despise agriculture. Large *jotdars*, as they become wealthy, let out as much of their land as they can afford, and take to some trade or profession. This dislike for cultivation on the part of the better castes is unequalled in any Province in India. In Northern, Central, Southern and Western India, we are informed, Brahmans commonly undertake, with hired labour, the farming of their own land. A distaste for cultivation seems no new thing in Bengal, for we find in a report to Government by the Magistrate of Midnapur, dated the 30th January 1802 (page 688 of Fifth Report of the

Select Committee on the affairs of the East India Company), that "talukdars hold in their own hands little or no part of their own estates to cultivate by means of servants". It is possible that this may be due to the greater specialization of the literary and professional castes in Bengal, the gap between whom and the low castes who till the soil is nowhere bridged over by such respectable cultivating castes as Kunbis, Jatts, Pattidars, Vellalas and even Thakurs, who comprise an important section of the agricultural community in other provinces. There seemed, at any rate till recently, very little hope of inducing the *bhadralok* to take to cultivation, on improved methods or otherwise; if the enormous profits to be made from the rapid rise in the price of jute did not tempt him, it seems at first sight somewhat unlikely that the extra profit to be attained by scientific methods will do so. It is, however, possible that widespread and striking success on the part of the Agricultural Department might give improved cultural methods an economic and intellectual prestige, that would induce the *bhadralok* to pay more attention to cultivation; and this hope, slender though it may be, should not be neglected in the future operations of the Agricultural Department.

There has always been a section among leading Bengali politicians and economists, who were anxious to induce the educated classes to take part in agriculture; and the evidence of several important unofficial witnesses showed the strength of this movement.

We must remember that in Bengal the social order is a despotism of caste, tempered by matriculation; and those members of the lower castes, who are entering the charmed circle of the middle classes through this ever-open portal, though education may render them averse from agricultural or industrial pursuits, have not the inherited traditions of the Brahmin or the Kayastha behind them; and the hope that a better type of specialized education and a more tempting prospect in the agricultural or the industrial world may lead them into more profitable paths than at present is not a vain one.

Co-operative credit, again, though it draws many public-spirited workers from the *bhadralok* castes, cannot largely benefit a class whose members for the most part derive their income from such inelastic sources as fixed rents and salaries, and whose principal economic relation with their fellow villagers, where they have any at all, is that of money-lenders. Until, therefore, the *bhadralok* take on an extensive scale to small industries or to agriculture, co-operation can help them but little. For the *bhadralok* to engage personally in small industries, such as weaving or other forms of handicraft, is not at all likely to come about at present. If it is desired to improve their economic status as a class, and to turn their political activities into more useful channels, the most promising line of policy is to help them to take part in organized industries.

Lack of industrial instinct among the people of Bengal.

208. It has been often said that Bengali national characteristics do not lend themselves to success in commerce or industries. The extraordinary contrast presented by the industrial position of the races of Eastern India in Calcutta and that attained by those of the Western

seaboard in Bombay, in the face of the same European competition, is often pointed to as a proof of this; and an additional argument is found in the wholesale failure of nearly all the Bengali concerns started under the influence of the *swadeshi* boom. There is some reason, too, for thinking that the trading castes of Bengal, even in the mofussil, are losing ground before the Marwaris and the country agencies of European firms. But against this must be set the fact, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Gangetic Delta was a most important centre of trade and industry. It was perhaps owing to this very reason that the effects of Western competition were so severely felt in Bengal. Its inhabitants have not yet been able to adapt themselves to the new methods, while the ease and certainty with which investments can be made in landed property, combined with the fertility of the soil, on the one hand, and the free and extensive opportunities for the acquisition of a Western literary education on the other, have turned their energies in a less profitable direction.

The Swadeshi movement: and the policy of the Madras Government.

209. The *swadeshi* failures were due, in the greater number of cases, to the fact that most of the investors and practically all the managing agency belonged to the literary class. These were not wanting in enterprise, and many of the latter had received some degree of technical training; the rock on which their management split was lack of business knowledge. In the case of joint-stock concerns, the lack of cohesion and mutual confidence was also a factor of failure. The popular enthusiasm had no real backing from local capitalists, who appeared to distrust its organisers, and but little help and guidance from Government, who were not in a position to afford them. But had there been at the time a well-equipped and successful Industrial Department of Government, the melancholy story of failures might never have had to be told, while the campaign of boycott would in all probability have been deprived of the respectable backing lent to it at first by the supporters of a real industrial movement. Fortunately, the Madras Government were able to meet a similar popular demand with a ready response. The effect was very marked. There has been a decided increase in factories in the Madras Presidency, where the proportion of small concerns controlled by local Indians has now become considerable :—

Year.	Number of factories in British India.	Number of factories in Madras.	Number of factories in Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Orissa.
1907 ...	2,291	161	492
1908 ...	416	190	472
1909 ...	2,450	205	449
1910 ...	2,534	221	462
1911 ...	2,563	230	458

It seems not improbable that some of this increase is due to the industrial policy of the Madras Government.

The imports of machinery and mill work show an even more marked difference in favour of Madras :—

Year.	Value in lakhs of import of machinery and mill work into India, excluding Madras.	Value in lakhs of machinery and mill work imported into Madras.
1910-11 ...	... 460·61	43·26
1911-12 ...	... 406·76	49·32
1912-13 ...	... 483·62	58·06

This appears to be due to the steady development of small-scale factories. Engines and plant for pumping and rice-hulling, erected under the direct control and advice of the Industrial Department, are now working in hundreds throughout the Presidency, and these, again, have many imitators.

Such a policy in Bengal could hardly have failed to have a powerful effect on the popular imagination, and might perhaps have rallied in support of Government the many sincere well-wishers of Indian industrial progress, whose help the political agitators of the *swadeshi* movement contrived for some time to secure.

Technical education as an industrial factor.

210. The example of Japan has often been quoted as a testimony to the success of technical education. It has been said that Japan owes her industrial progress to the knowledge gained by sending her students to Western countries, and by starting technical colleges, under Western teachers. But the all-important fact has been overlooked that before attempting any form of technical education, the first step taken by Japan was to start factories, either financed by Government or with Government control and encouragement, but managed by experts from abroad. Local conditions, no less than English theories of political economy, have stood in the way of such a whole-hearted policy of State interference in India ; and the popular desire for industrial progress has mostly expressed itself in an urgent demand for technical education. How far this can of itself go towards creating industries, how far is the presence of a system of exploitation of local products, highly organized on Western lines, the theoretical training of Indian students insufficient to enable them to make good their footing as industrialists,—these are much-debated points on which the Committee would prefer not to express a definite opinion. They have no ground for suggesting any relaxation of the efforts to improve technical education. But they may at least assert with some confidence, that, if there is any other method that promises definite results, merely doctrinaire objections ought not to stand in the way of its being tried. The tendency of technical education is to become more and more costly ; while, so far as the people of Bengal are concerned, its only results have been the production of a number of Government engineers and technical teachers, and of a very few mechanical and electrical engineers who have obtained private employment. It has provided practically no Indian employés for the great local industries of Calcutta, and a notoriously large number of its students take up employment for which their special training is of little use.

From a perusal of the history of various *swadeshi* enterprises, and from the opinion of numerous witnesses, we consider it fully proved that failure was in almost all cases due less to the lack of some degree of technical knowledge, than to the inability to apply it under commercial conditions; to the lack of experience in buying and selling, in watching the various stages of manufacture and taking care that the manufacturing cost of an article is properly estimated to start with, and worked down to afterwards; to the absence of all-round trade knowledge, which teaches a man what definite advantages are necessary to the starting of any particular industry in any particular place, what should be the working capital and what is the best and most economical type of plan.

Direct industrial encouragement by Government.

211. There seems no means by which would-be industrialists in Bengal can acquire this knowledge, except by some form of Government demonstration.

That the direct encouragement of industries by Government must necessarily lead to interference with private enterprise, is, in our opinion, by no means axiomatic. The only branches of private enterprise with which such action on the part of the Government of Bengal might possibly interfere are those controlled by the large firms of Calcutta, whether Indian or European. Any interference of this kind must, and can be avoided. The larger organized industries are not a suitable field for Government effort, and so far as England itself is concerned, a prosperous, organised, industrial India, will be an infinitely more valuable trading neighbour, than India as a mere producer of raw materials and consumer of manufactured goods.

A Government may be justified in taking up an industrial enterprise, either with the ultimate object of inducing a certain class to become industrialists or in order to introduce that particular industry to its people. In the former case, action would be justified when the local conditions of a tract are favourable to a certain industry, but its people, from want of industrial skill or enterprise, had hitherto not attempted it; or when they are carrying out a certain process in a manner which could be more cheaply and efficiently performed with the aid of modern mechanical appliances, from the employment of which they have hitherto been deterred by the lack of training or example, or of industrial organization. The following are instances where Government action in the latter direction would be helpful. Industrialists in India, European as well as Indian, at present hang back from new ventures in any direction, where success will not bring them at least a temporary monopoly. Monopolies can be obtained either by the creation of a patent, or by the building up of a highly specialized industry that protects itself by the elaboration of its carefully guarded processes. There is little inducement to pioneers, where technical success will bring only a crowd of competitors, unhampered by the dead weight of capital wasted in preliminary efforts. Again, there is a class of cases, where expensive machinery will have to be erected and maintained at a loss for some years, to make the production of the raw material possible. Aloes, for example, can never be grown at a profit, in the absence of an efficient and costly fibre extractor, and this, again,

will never repay the cost of installation, without a large area of land under aloes. All these are cases in which the Government of a country like India may well step in, and sustain the first loss, the extent of which may be to some extent forecasted, to the great advantage of the general public. Some initial loss must be expected, and the unwillingness of Government to recognise this principle has been largely responsible for its reluctance to engage in direct industrial work. This is a policy for which there are precedents from many parts of the world. The necessity of carrying on demonstration work in agriculture, the greatest industry of the country, on a commercial scale, is fully admitted, and it is only where this principle has been put into practice that agricultural improvements have been taken up by the people.

Recent industrial enterprises of Government.

212. In the part history of European enterprise in India, the direct commercial development of the country by the British, whether as a trading company or as a ruling power, holds a prominent place. The introduction of the silk and indigo industries; the fostering of sugar manufacture, and its subsequent discouragement in the interest of the West Indies; the help given in the introduction of the tea industry, and the establishment of cinchona plantations are among the best known instances of such action.

The history of the more recent policy of Government in regard to industrial demonstration gives no ground for the fear of undue waste of money, or unjustifiable interference with private enterprise. A brief account of this policy will show the lines on which proposals have hitherto been framed and the degree of success which they have attained. The first attempt to organize a pioneer industry was the development of aluminium hollow-ware manufacture by the Madras School of Arts. This was begun in the year 1898, and in 1903 was sold to the Indian Aluminium Company, an imitator and rival, for Rs. 2,09,600. The School of Arts was never allowed actually to show a profit on its aluminium work, as surpluses were mostly spent on experiments; but the Indian Aluminium Company thought, and thought rightly, that the manufacture of aluminium hollow-ware had been shown to be a profitable venture. The Company, though it has many imitators, small and large, in various parts of India, is now making a profit, which sometimes exceeds and seldom falls short of 10 per cent. It pays a monthly wage bill of Rs. 5,000; and in addition to its European Manager employs an Indian works manager, a B.E. of the Madras Engineering College, on Rs. 500 a month and commission. The benefit to the country generally from the demonstration of this particular industry has been appreciable; and the European aluminium producer, who could with difficulty have imported his light and bulky manufactured ware to compete with locally manufactured brass and copper, sold Rs. 25·51 lakhs worth, or 35,809 cwt., of aluminium to India in the year 1912-13, against Rs. 1·05 lakhs, or 890 cwt., in 1904-05. Before the Madras School of Arts took up the task, the import was infinitesimal.

Prior to the experiments undertaken in Madras by Government, chrome-tanning was always thought impossible under Indian climatic conditions. The process was started on a commercial scale; and in 1910

after 7½ years' working, the factory was sold. The results of working were as follows:—

	Rs.
Capital cost	69,596
Cost of working	4,86,814
Total ...	5,56,410
Receipts	4,04,780
Sale of factory and stock	96,272
Total ...	5,01,052

There were objections by rival traders, in consequence of which operations were gradually restricted, with injurious effect on profits, and ultimately the factory was sold. But Mr. Chatterton claims that, at a cost of Rs. 55,000, the practicability of chrome-tanning in India has been proved, and a large and flourishing industry rendered possible.

Industrial policy in the United Provinces.

213. The first Government to make proposals for the direct encouragement of industries was that of the United Provinces, who, following the recommendations of the Naini Tal Industrial Conference of 1907, put forward a set of proposals, of which a brief *resumé*, omitting features not relevant to the present discussion, is given below.

An Industrial Department was to be constituted under a Director of Industries, who would control Technical Education and the Technological Institute, which it was proposed to establish at Cawnpore, and would deal with industrial questions generally. It was recognized that a man of very special qualifications was required, whose previous experience should include engineering with some knowledge of chemistry. He was to be advised by a Board, which was mainly official and non-expert. The principle was accepted that Government might pioneer industries which did not already exist in the Province and help new enterprises with grants of money. The Director of Industries and the Professors of the Technological Institute should acquire and disseminate industrial information, and the experts under the control of the former should advise the public on the purchase of machinery, etc. Technical training was to be provided for workmen, foremen, and managers of organized industries, as well as for investigators and technical inspectors. The training of workmen for organized industries was to be carried out in industrial schools, under English masters with a mechanical training and experience. Foremen and Managers of organized industries, as well as investigators, would be trained at the Technological Institute. This Institute would deal with engineering, both civil, mechanical, electric and hydraulic, and with chemistry as applied to sugar, acids and alkalis, bleaching, dyeing, printing of textiles, and paper-making. The following industries might be encouraged by experiment and demonstration on a commercial scale; small hand-loom factories; cotton-seed; oil manufacture; paper-making;

match-making; and button-making. There was, besides, an extensive scheme for instruction in handicrafts. These proposals were backed by the high authority of Sir John Hewett and of the many leading industrialists who took part in the Conference. The opinion of Sir John Hewett, as expressed in paragraph 25 of letter No. 785 from the Government of the United Provinces, dated the 7th September 1907, must carry great weight:—"The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt the Government will obtain a rich return for its outlay, not only in the increased well-being, but also in the greater contentment of the people; for there can no longer be any doubt that the public eagerly desires a vigorous policy of industrial development." The Secretary of State in his despatch No. 110, dated the 30th July 1909, while not raising any exception to the proposals to pioneer certain industries, had grave doubts of the usefulness of the large scheme for a Technological Institute at Cawnpore and of the allocation of the various branches of instruction between this and the Thomason College. For this reason he sanctioned the proposals only on a diminished scale.

Resolution No. 1163—XVIII-415, dated the 27th August 1913, of the United Provinces Government contains most interesting information regarding the subsequent development of the scheme, and the various modifications which experience has shown to be necessary. It was admitted that the scheme of training men as managers of organized industrial concerns had failed; and that the only school for training such men is that of experience. The Director of Industries could not, it was considered, also be the head of the Technological Institute, for which post a highly trained commercial chemist was needed; whereas the primary requisites for the Directorship were business instinct and experience, with knowledge, or readiness to acquire knowledge of the local industries. It was found necessary to place the Rurki and Cawnpore institutions each under its own separate management, and to leave them independent of the Director of Industries. The latter under the Secretary of State's orders was, in his capacity as Inspector of Technical Education, to be under the Director of Public Instruction; as regards his industrial work, he was himself to be the head of a Department immediately under Government. The Technological Institute at Cawnpore has not yet been established, owing to the criticism raised by the Board of Education, Whitehall, who, on being asked to recruit a Principal, replied that the pay offered was insufficient, and the qualifications demanded were too multifarious. The Atkinson-Dawson report went further, and criticised the scheme of training workmen for organized industries in industrial schools; this, they thought, could only be done in factories; but the United Provinces Government did not accept this opinion.

The proposed investigation of the chemistry of leather manufacture was omitted from the programme of the Technological Institute; and the sugar research was handed over to the Agricultural Department. A Sugar Engineer had been appointed in 1912 by the United Provinces Government, at the instance of the Board of Agriculture. He remodelled, with the help of a Government grant, a badly designed Indian-owned factory in Pilibhit, and enabled it to work at a profit; and it is stated by the

United Provinces Government that there are good prospects of more companies being floated under Indian management, and with capital furnished by a class of investors who would not be tempted by a concern under European management, but required the help and advice of a Government expert to give them confidence. In addition to this, a small experimental factory was proposed and loans on a considerable scale were given to several Indian and one European concern, for the improvement or establishment of cane factories. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Naini Tal Conference, a cotton-seed oil factory was started, under the management of a Cawnpore firm, but on behalf of, and at the expense of, Government; after being run for some time at a loss it was closed down in 1911, under the general orders of the Secretary of State regarding pioneer industries, but not until it had proved the commercial possibility of manufacturing cotton-seed oil in India. Cotton-seed oil mills have since been started and worked successfully in Bombay, Navsari and Akola.

Industrial policy in Madras.

214. The Madras Government soon followed the lead given by the United Provinces. In 1908 they held an Industrial Conference at Ootacamund, and in their Government Order No. 2894, dated the 17th October 1908, discussing the recommendations of the Conference, they accepted the general principle that the exploitation of industries should be regarded, not as a normal, but as an exceptional function of Government, and declared that, if due restrictions were maintained, private enterprise had nothing to fear. They proposed the appointment of a special officer to control pioneer enterprises and practical industrial education, which they defined as "instruction in the performance of definite operations, not necessarily involving the teaching of general principles." Technical education would remain under the Director of Public Instruction. The special officer should establish a bureau of industrial information and an Industrial museum, and compile a list of industries important enough to merit Government assistance. This officer was also to be assisted by an Industrial Advisory Board. In his despatch No. 50 Revenue, dated the 29th July 1910 the Secretary of State said that the "results of the attempts to create new industries were not of a character to remove his doubts as to the utility of State efforts in this direction, unless it is strictly limited to industrial instruction and avoids the semblance of a commercial venture. . . . The policy which he was prepared to sanction was, that State funds may be expended upon familiarizing the people with such improvements in the methods of production as modern science and the practice of European countries can suggest. Further than this the State should not go, and it must be left to private enterprise to demonstrate that these improvements can be adopted with commmercial advantage." The limitations of policy laid down in this despatch prevented for a time any further development of the principle of direct industrial effort by Government. Important relaxations of these limitations, however, have subsequently been permitted, as has already been shown in the case of the sugar industry of the United Provinces, and as will be seen by the action taken in the Punjab, and by the orders of the Secretary of State on the proposals of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government.

In Madras a canning factory for fish has been formed on a commercial basis by the Madras Fisheries Department, and the Madras Department of Industry has been reconstituted with effect from 1st April 1914.

Industrial policy in Eastern Bengal and Assam.

215. As the result of a conference held at Dacca in 1909, it was proposed in Eastern Bengal and Assam Government letter No. 3339 M., dated the 12th May 1909, to create a Department of Industries, of which the head was to be at first an administrative officer of the Indian Civil Service. All forms of technical and industrial education, which were in the opinion of the conference inseparable, should be under the control of the Director of Industries, who would also be the head of the Dacca Central Institute. This would contain a small technological laboratory, a museum and reference bureau. The experts who were to help the Director would be in some cases instructors in the Dacca Central Institute, and in others would be temporarily engaged to demonstrate special industries. The Central Institute would give lower courses of a practical nature in various subjects, including a thorough training in a factory or workshop. Small factories were to be grouped round the Central Institute, and students trained there as assistants and foremen. It was proposed to start pioneer factories for the following purposes :—

(1) to introduce improved processes, *e.g.*, sugar and hand-loom factories ;

(2) to demonstrate the use of small engines for factories, *e.g.*, in rice mills ;

(3) to introduce industries new to the locality, *e.g.*, lac ; and

(4) to improve the organization of home industries, *e.g.*, hand-loom factories.

All these would be managed on commercial lines. The manufacture of sugar, leather and vegetable oil was to be investigated, with a view to the establishment of small factories. The Dacca Tanning Company (since defunct) might be helped, and used as a training and demonstration centre ; and the Rangpur Tobacco Factory should also be watched and helped. The Secretary of State, in his despach No. 12 Public, dated the 19th January 1912, approved generally of these proposals, and in no way implied that the part of them relating to the demonstration of industries interfered with the principles laid down in his despatch to the Madras Government. He considered, however, that they required recasting in view of the annulment of the Partition, and he desired that this should be done in a way that would secure for the Eastern Bengal districts the benefits of the policy for the improvement of technical and industrial education that the late Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam hoped to effect.

Industrial policy in the Punjab.

216. In the Punjab, the only action taken so far by Government has been an offer to subsidise a glass factory, on condition of its affording certain instructional facilities ; and the grant of indirect assistance to a Government scholarship-holder in starting a leather factory. The

question of loans and grants to Indian sugar factories has also been considered.

No other information regarding Government encouragment to organized industries in recent years is before the Committee, though the necessity of improving cottage industries has been everywhere recognized, and industrial teaching or other more direct forms of help have been provided for them.

The accepted principles of industrial policy.

217. From the above description several general principles, important for our present purpose, can be deduced. In the first place, the principle that Government may in certain cases and within certain limits assist industry, by directly pioneering enterprises, seems to have been ultimately accepted, in spite of its initial rejection. A careful comparison of the various proposals suggests the following limitations of the principle. The industry should, in respect of its methods at any rate, be new to the locality, should not interfere with private enterprise, should be capable of being tested commercially on not too large a scale, and should possess some special advantage likely to ensure its success. The fact that there is a local demand for an article made abroad, for instance, is not of itself a sufficient reason for attempting its manufacture in India. In the next place, the Department of Industries, so far, at any rate, as industrial experiment and demonstration are concerned, should be separated from the Department of Education. The consensus of opinion on this point is very marked, and seems to have strong reasons to justify it. The proposals made with regard to the control of industrial education show signs of compromise; and there seems some doubt whether direct industrial work, by retaining a connection with industrial education will gain enough to counterbalance the awkwardness of the arrangement in force in certain Provinces, by which the Director of Industries works, under the Director of Public Instruction for some purposes and not for others. Thirdly, it seems clear that there is no demand for ready-made captains of industry; and that the institutions, which at vast expense teach a more advanced theory than the pupil will ever have occasion to use in practice, unfit him for the employment he is likely to obtain. Lastly, the main difficulty in the inception of a Department of Industry seems to be the selection of the Director. He must possess a keen business sense; and though he cannot be an expert in more than one or two subjects, he must be enough of an expert to control experts; he must also possess or be able to acquire local knowledge. An expert highly skilled in a special branch of research, such as applied chemistry, is needed to take charge of a Technological Institute; but, as Sir James Meston observes, he is not the man for the post of Director of Industries.

The man who is wanted is one who could himself acquire a respectable fortune by private enterprise; and such a man will demand a good salary and a reasonable discretion. The wider the sphere of responsibility, the higher the salary that can be offered, and the more independent of extraneous control the post will be. These are additional arguments for setting the Department of Industry entirely free from the supervision of the Department of Education.

Proposals now before the Government of Bengal.

218. We understand that a scheme for the improvement of industrial and technical education is now before the Government of Bengal. It consists of two parts: that for Eastern Bengal is a modification, based on the orders of the Secretary of State referred to in paragraph 215 above, of the proposals of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government, and that for Western Bengal is centred round the Calcutta Technological Institute.

These proposals are contained in a note, dated the 11th March 1913, by the Hon'ble Mr. Nathan, C.S.I., and in Chapter VIII of the Report on a Technological Institute for Calcutta. In the latter it was stated that the Director of Industries, West Bengal, who would be head of the Technological Institute, would be helped by his expert subordinates in supervising technical education and encouraging industries; and there would be a Vice-Principal to relieve the Director of the detailed management and supervision of the Institute. The industries of which the Industries Department should attempt the improvement, and the method in which this should be done, were left to be worked out by the Director after his appointment. The location of a College of Civil Engineering at Dacca would, it was thought, necessitate certain modifications in the original proposals. The School and College of Engineering would be independent of the Dacca Central Technical Institute, which would be under the Director of Industries. Assam and its various institutions would, of course, be excluded from the scope of the proposals. In the scheme as modified by the orders of the Government of India, and by the annulment of the Partition, the educational duties of the Director bore, it was alleged, a larger proportion to his whole functions than in the original plan, so that the appointment of an expert, rather than of an administrative officer, seemed indicated. The Director of Industries must work very largely through his expert subordinates, who could be supplied from the staff of the Institute far more efficiently and economically than in any other manner. It was, therefore, thought necessary to enable the Director to command their services freely by making him the head of the Institute. The largely educational character of the scheme was marked and the difficulty of co-ordinating the work of the two Directors provided for, by placing them both under the Director of Public Instruction.

A criticism of these proposals.

219. The scheme seems designed to afford an extensive provision for technical education throughout Bengal, while contravening in a somewhat marked manner most of the principles adopted in previous proposals for the direct improvement of industries. It appears to the Committee that the portion of the scheme that deals with this latter scheme of work would be more certain of success, if its administration and control were entrusted to agencies of more commercial and less scholastic predisposition than the heads of Technical Institutes working under the Department of Education.

We feel doubtful whether such an organization will possess the commercial instinct to suggest suitable industries, or the business knowledge to control demonstration factories; while it seems all important to entrust the improvement of cottage industries to an agency well acquainted

with village economic conditions and closely connected with the Department of Co-operative Credit. We think it would be better to separate industrial work from the control of the Technological Institutes, even at the risk of the services of their Professors being less freely available. To conduct any pioneer enterprise, practical experts from Europe will have to be brought out as factory managers; and the employment of such men in the Technological Institutes does not appear to be contemplated by the scheme. On the whole, it will be best to separate the entire charge of the Director of Industries from that of the Director of Public Instruction, both in respect of direct industrial work and of the control of industrial education. We are not in a position to recommend that the control of technical education should be taken away from the Director of Public Instruction. But we recognize that the divorce of technical training from the only department concerned with practical industrial work will tend to make the Professors of the institutes more professorial and to evolve methods of training more designed to give the highest theoretical results than to produce the type of man that employers require.

The entire industrial work of both the Dacca and Calcutta schemes should in our opinion be handed over to a single Director of Industries.

Remarks on Industrial and Technical Education.

220. We do not feel that we are in a position to make any definite suggestion for the improvement of industrial education, but it is generally admitted that this has so far been very largely a failure in Bengal; and we think it our duty to point out that technical and industrial students, where inefficient, find it far harder to obtain employment than arts students. It is highly undesirable at the present juncture to add to the number of educated unemployables.

The chief difficulties in the way of technical and industrial education seem to be, first, that it has hitherto proved exceedingly difficult to give Indian technical students a training on sufficiently commercial lines, while there is at present in Calcutta little or no demand for their services when trained; and in the case of industrial training, students will not persevere in the school course long enough to obtain a full benefit from it, or even attend at all without stipends. The above remarks do not apply to engineering students.

As regards the business side of training, we propose that this should be given to a large extent in demonstration factories; but in view of the fact that the lines of industrial and technical training seem at present far from settled, we make the suggestion that in all industrial and technical institutions, training should be given in workshops managed on commercial lines, and with business accounts, the method and object of which should form part of the curriculum in the higher courses; and we also note the possibility, which has been put before us, of adult artisans being ready to come and learn particular improved processes, which have been previously demonstrated to them, when they cannot spare the time for or see the advantage of learning the craft as a whole. An analogy may be found in the "short courses"

for agriculturists in particular processes, now being carried out with great success in certain Provinces, where a general primary education in agriculture had proved a complete failure.

Industrial Proposals of the Committee.

221. To recapitulate, our recommendations regarding industrial improvement are briefly these :—

That, as an interim measure, and while the large and elaborate scheme for technical and industrial education now before Government is being considered, a Director of Industries be appointed at once, independent of the Director of Public Instruction ; that expert managers be engaged under his control to carry on certain demonstration enterprises ; that favourable subjects for demonstration might be found in small power-plants for rice-hulling, oil mills, etc., in coir and copra factories, and in small power sugar, or even *gur*, installations, but that definite suggestions for the selection of the most suitable industry or industries must come from the Director. These factories will not for a long time be so large or so numerous, that they cannot easily be supplied with qualified pupils before the proposed technological institutes are started. The control of industrial, as opposed to technical education, should be handed over entirely to the Department of Industries.

All work in connection with cottage industries, whether demonstration or teaching work, should be under the Director of Industries ; and he should also take over the functions described in the proposals of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government for the establishment of an Industrial Bureau.

Proposals regarding the Agricultural Department.

222. So far we have considered the special need of a single section—the educated middle class. We have now to see how the economic necessities of the vast numbers below them in the social scale are being met, and it is necessary to draw attention here to the fact that the rapid growth of education among these is greatly increasing their political importance.

The Committee have had special facilities for comparing the working of the Agricultural Departments in Bengal and in the United Provinces, Central Provinces and Madras ; and they have arrived at the definite conclusion that the equipment of the department in Bengal has hitherto been lacking in certain features essential to success. It has now been working for as many years as most other Provincial Departments of Agriculture ; it is organized on similar lines ; indigenous agriculture is no nearer perfection in Bengal than in most parts of India ; and yet the practical results are very small, if expressed in terms of the number of rupees by which the income of the cultivators of the Province has been increased. The main cause for this appears to be the insufficient equipment of the department for purposes of demonstration. The Deputy Director is at present employed on a comparatively minor duty, the management of the various farms. His proper functions are much more important. He should be responsible for training the ministerial agency of demonstration ; for selecting, under the guidance of the Director and in close and constant touch with the research members of the staff, the

subjects for demonstration; and finally, and most important of all, for organizing the demonstration work itself. Many of the most successful lines of demonstration in other Provinces have not been the fruit of deep scientific research; they have been found by the practical study of the best local methods, and introduced in other places where agriculture is less advanced. The Bengal department appear to have discovered more than one improvement in local methods of agriculture, and there is no doubt that the energetic and successful demonstration of these on a large scale would not only benefit the cultivating classes, but also greatly impress their imagination, and make it easy for the department to obtain the help and co-operation of the people. No real popular assistance will be forthcoming, until the department has practically shown its ability to increase the cultivator's income. We have found in other Provinces that the display of the beneficent activities of Government through the Department of Agriculture has appealed very strongly to the imagination of the people; it has conferred on them a considerable benefit in actual cash, and the popular organization called into being by the necessity for demonstration has been educative in the best way. But without a considerable strengthening of the European demonstration staff, such results can never be hoped for in Bengal.

Remarks regarding the Department of Co-operative Credit.

223. Co-operation has succeeded in Bengal, in spite of very great initial difficulties, past all expectation, and is fast making itself felt as one of the greatest political assets of Government. But we think it necessary to voice a warning, lest the very proper policy of helping the people to help themselves, by maintaining the co-operative movement on unofficial lines, should lead to a weakening of the position of the District Officer and, if we may use the expression, to over-departmentalizing in the effort to de-officialize. There are certain functions in respect of co-operative credit that must be fulfilled by Government, either through the Registrar or others of its officers; some of these may suitably be delegated to District Officers. At present there is a certain tendency to regard the Department of Co-operative Credit as something apart from Government, and to deprecate the interference of the District Officer. The result is a weakening of his responsibility for a part of his district work which will soon be of very great importance, while Government is deprived of much of the credit for beneficence to which it is fairly entitled. It seems doubtful how far the orders contained in Bengal Government Circular No. 20-Agri., dated the 30th August 1911, are likely to produce the required effect. To qualify the District Officer to take his proper share in the responsibility for the control of the movement, Assistant Collectors must receive a practical training in co-operative credit.

Co-ordination of the Departments of Co-operative Credit Agriculture and Industries.

224. We have now to consider the question of the proper correlation of the Departments of Agriculture and Co-operation. We have seen that in Bengal agriculture lagged behind its sister department; but in Provinces where they have advanced side by side, they are building up a feeling of solidarity, of economic self-consciousness, among the largest class of the Indian population, a class who see too much of Government in the tax-collector, the policeman, and

the process-server, and too little of it in its beneficent aspect. Where agriculture and co-operation have gone hand in hand, they are covering the country with a net-work of truly organic institutions, evolved and built up by the cultivating classes themselves, for the advancement of their own financial and economic interests. In this way not only has a most important section of the community been drawn closer to the officers of Government, but a fresh form of common interest has been added to those which, as this report has attempted to show, can be grouped together in village municipal life. If the Co-operative and Agricultural Departments can be induced to think in terms of Panchayati Unions, the way will have been prepared for a great improvement in village organization and for a great advance in the work of these Departments.

This interconnection of agriculture and co-operative credit is especially important in Bengal, where for carrying out some of the most hopeful lines of agricultural improvement, such as the drainage and silting of low-lying lands, and the supply of seeds and manures, co-operation affords by far the most promising mechanism.

It is, then, of extreme importance to secure the organic connection of the departments concerned with agriculture (including fisheries and veterinary), domestic industries, and co-operative credit. Without co-operative distribution, agricultural improvement on an economic scale, especially in so important a matter as the supply of better varieties of seed, is impossible, while better finance and the purchase of improved implements for artisans, which the work of the Industrial Department may make available, are most readily effected with the help of co-operative credit. The Committee found that one of the great difficulties in the way of the Serampore Weaving Factory was that Co-operative Societies were unwilling to help weavers who had learned at the Institute, to purchase improved looms; but it is hardly reasonable to expect small and poor artisan societies to risk their money in this way, unless close intercommunication between the Co-operative Credit and Industrial Departments has already paved the way. Within the last three years, the Bombay Co-operative Credit Department has created a large demand for fly-shuttle looms where none existed before. Over three hundred were sold through their agency at a single weaving centre.

Proposals for the control of Departments of Rural Development.

225. The Committee understands that in Bengal, while industries are controlled by the Director of Public Instruction, the Departments of Agriculture and Co-operative Credit are directly under Government. They desire to point out that there is some tendency at present in the direction of placing such departments as that of Agriculture under technical heads. But these departments, on the one hand, have to keep in touch with cultivators and artisans, and with the district staff; for this purpose an agency is needed for their control, well acquainted with rural economics, and with the principles of district work. On the other hand a small technical department, under a specialist head, often finds it difficult to secure from Government a sympathetic and intelligent hearing for its proposals. To strengthen the position of the departments, to keep them in touch with village conditions, and to ensure their close and

continuous interconnection, there is much to be said for the suggestion that they should, under their respective heads, be grouped under the control of a single officer of Government with large executive and financial powers. He should not be so senior in service nor so pressed for time that he is unable to gain a first-hand knowledge of their working, nor so junior that his approval marks merely an additional stage in the pilgrimage towards sanction which all administrative proposals have to perform. We understand that a scheme was laid informally before the Simla Conference of Registrars in October last, which purported to secure these conditions in Provinces which do not possess a Council Government, by placing the three departments in charge of an officer of the status of a junior Financial Commissioner, called a Commissioner of Rural Development, and possessing many of the powers of a Local Government. We think that the Government of Bengal might consider with advantage, whether some modification of this scheme, such as the addition of another member to the Board of Revenue, might not be devised to suit Bengal conditions.

Resume of proposals.

226. The proposals of the Committee in this chapter are briefly recapitulated below :—

(1) The appointment of a Director of Industries, a part of whose duties should be to investigate promising local lines of industrial work and to control factories for the demonstration of new industries.

(2) The appointment of expert factory managers under his orders.

(3) The appointment of more European Deputy Directors of Agriculture for demonstration work.

(4) The allotment, as soon as possible, of specific functions to District and Subdivisional Officers in respect of co-operative credit, and the practical training of Assistant Collectors in this important subject.

(5) The co-ordination of the Departments of Industries, Co-operative Credit and Agriculture, with their own heads under a high controlling officer.

E. V. LEVINGE ... *President.*
H. V. LOVETT ...
N. D. BEATSON BELL ...
K. C. DE ... ... } *Members.*
C. E. LOW ... ...

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT DEPARTMENT.

APPOINTMENT.

CALCUTTA, THE 21ST JANUARY 1915.

RESOLUTION No. 375 A.

READ—

Resolution of this Government, No. 4425 P.—D., dated the 25th October 1913.
Letter No. 255 D. A. C., dated the 29th May 1914, from the President, District Administration Committee.

IN the Resolution cited in the preamble, the Government of Bengal, with the concurrence of the Government of India, appointed a Committee to examine the conditions prevailing in the districts of Bengal, to compare them with those existing in other provinces, and to report in what respects the administrative machinery of the Presidency could be improved. The scope of the Committee's enquiries was necessarily wide; and the report, which the Committee submitted in May 1914, deals with many important questions affecting the general administration of this Presidency. The Governor in Council hopes that through the publication of this report the attention of the public may be drawn to the difficult problems arising out of these questions and that he may be favoured with criticisms and advice which will assist him in dealing with them.

2. His Excellency in Council desires to take this opportunity of acknowledging the services which the Hon'ble Mr. E. V. Levinge, C.S.I., Mr. H. V. Lovett, C.S.I., and Mr. C. E. Low, C.I.E., have rendered to this Government as President and Members of the Committee. He also wishes to express his indebtedness to the Governments of the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa and Madras, and to their officers, for the help which they gave to the Committee in the course of its enquiries.

ORDER.—Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be published in the *Calcutta Gazette*, and that copies of the report be forwarded to the principal newspapers and representative Associations of Bengal.

Ordered also that copies of the report be forwarded to the selected officers and departments of Government whom the report may concern.

By order of the Governor in Council,

J. G. CUMMING,
Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

B. S. Press—9-3-1915—4053J—1,000—C. S. M.